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ABSTRACT

This guidebook for managing declining enrollment in an era of fiscal retrenchment is presented in three sections. Section 1 describes the extent of enrollment decline; analyzes its causes, including changes in birth rates, women's work roles, and migration and housing patterns; and explores its effects, including reduced school budgets and staffs, restricted class offerings, and increased class size. Special attention is paid to the problems associated with school closing, particularly when urban schools are affected. Section 2 presents suggestions for coping with declining enrollment. These include guidelines for enrollment prediction; plans for involving the community in the strengthening of programs through needs assessment, goal setting, strategy determination, and evaluation of the results of changes; suggestions for staff involvement in retrenchment planning; strategies for reducing the professional staff; and recommendations for using a task force approach to ensure community involvement and communication. Section 3 notes contributions that state education agencies can make to combat enrollment decline problems. Among these are improving forecasting methods, providing planning assistance and special services, and developing more flexible staffing policies. (Author/PGD)

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DECLINING ENROLLMENTS: Managing In The Period of Fiscal Retrenchment

A Research Paper Prepared For The Urban Education Network

by

Margaret Solomon

Urban Education Program
CEMREL, Inc.
3120 59th Street
St. Louis, Missouri
Telephone: 314-781-2900

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ABSTRACT

This paper is divided into three sections. Section One presents research findings relative to the major causes of declining enrollments (lowered birth rate, changes in women's work roles, migration, housing patterns) and its subsequent effects: less money in school budgets, a lessening in the variety and number of courses offered, increased class size, and the necessity of reducing staff. Decline will also cause school closings, a particularly difficult and delicate enterprise. Urban schools in particular, it is noted, face factors that inhibit successful school closings: a bureaucratic structure that encourages a low quality level of data collection and of information analysis, which vitiate genuine community and staff involvement.

Section Two presents research suggestions relative to coping with the effects of decline and retrenchment--among them, guidelines for predicting enrollments accurately, and a plan for strengthening educational programs that includes involving the community in assessing needs, setting goals, determining strategies, and evaluating results as the program is altered. Staff involvement in alleviating fears during the period of retrenchment is crucial to developing a workable program. Specific strategies for reducing the professional force are presented, along with research that shows that, although flawed, seniority is preferred over performance-based layoffs. The Task Force for involving community in the closure process is suggested as a primary means of ensuring community involvement and encouraging two-way communication at all levels. The point is that communication and involvement builds supports, and support is, besides planning, the strongest guarantee of successfully riding out the retrenchment period.

Suggestions from research on the contributions states might offer comprise Section Three. Some of these suggestions include improving forecasting methods, help with planning, providing special services, and the development of more flexible staffing policies.

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FOREWORD

In the spring of 1980, a group of educators, drawn from the largest school districts in the Midwest and their state agencies, voted management of financial retrenchment one of their highest priorities and most urgent needs. In a small group they noted that they hoped to develop, with the aid of a CEMREL coordinator, information and resources that would help them reach three quite specific goals: development of long-range planning for facilities, resources, staff and programs; development of effective educational programs in the face of dwindling resources; and development of plans that would specifically help them prepare staff, parents, and students for transfer to new schools.* Among the needs they cited were the need for better systematized information in general, but specifically for population data; information on methods for communicating, and planning with boards of education, staff, parents, and others, and, of course, greater financial resources with which to help solve the problems the period of retrenchment has engendered.

Declining Enrollments: Managing in the Period of Financial Retrenchment is a synthesis of research designed to help urban educators reach those goals and satisfy those needs. Of itself, it does not provide answers to the very difficult problems facing big city school administrators today, but it is intended to provide them with access to theory and practice for making the difficult decisions that the times demand.

*See "Priority Issues for Collaborative Research and Development Groups Selected by RJPG Members At April 20-22 (1980) Meeting." Unpublished Report of the Urban Education Program, CEMREL, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that declining enrollments in the public schools is one of the most serious problems facing educators today. This is brought out clearly in Declining Enrollments: The Challenge of The Coming Decade (Abromowitz & Rosenfeld, 1978) by Carl Perkins, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, who writes in the preface to that volume: "The phenomenon of declining enrollments will most likely have a greater impact on education in the next decade than any other forseeable trend. How we in Education choose to handle it will either reinforce or undo the progress we have made toward achieving the goals we have pursued during the past decade" (p. xiii).

The research literature on declining enrollment and consequent retrenchment is becoming richer every year. A pioneer study in 1974 by Roedekohr has been followed by numerous state reports (Kentucky Department of Education, 1978; Michigan Department of Education, 1977; Minnesota State Department of Education, 1978; Oregon State Department of Education, 1977; State of Illinois, 1975, 1980;) and by individual attention from Berman and McLaughlin (1977);Boyd (1979); Iannaconne (1979); Keough (1978); Thomas (1977, 1980); and others.

The consensus seems to be that retrenchment brings with it a host of managerial problems, many relating to such sensitive issues as program quality, personnel reductions, and facility closing. The administrator of

today must be a technological expert, able to systematize data and project enrollments, and must remain a model of tact in handling the many human problems that severe cutbacks have brought about. This is a "tall order" in any set of circumstances, but a monumental one today, when administrators are beset by concerns that bear on the continued existence of the educational system as we know it.

How, we might ask, did this situation come about? How is it that schools and educators have fallen on such difficult times? Further, are there solutions that might alleviate the stress of cutback on administrators and provide them with help in long-range planning? These are some of the questions around which the present discussion is organized. For focus we take declining enrollment, "the overarching developmental pattern [in education] that highlights the tensions between internal and external demands[on management]" (Boyd, 1980, p. 276). Arguments exist as to whether enrollment or inflation drives retrenchment, but these arguments soon take on, for local administrators, all the relevance of the chicken versus the egg debates. Local educators must, in the end, deal with consequences that are very much the same for both phenomena. In addition, the external developments to fiscal retrenchment in public education, including the health of the economy, the flow of federal and state monies, and the local tax base are so complex and technical, that they argue for financial expertise before approaching them. A discussion of the problem from the viewpoint of declining enrollment would seem to offer most school district educators more opportunity to make practical use of the information than one organized around the fiscal entrenchment in general.

The reader will find that the first chapter of this paper is devoted to a definition of the problem of declining enrollments, including current statistics and a discussion of the causes and effects of decline. Chapter II is a discussion of some effective strategies for coping with the negative effects that declining enrollment has brought about, and ways of realizing positive effects. In the third chapter, recommendations from research pertaining to the help states might give local districts are offered.

I. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

How Far Have Enrollments Declined?

The facts of declining enrollment, trumpeted in daily newspapers and national magazines, are by now well-known and accessible: According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 1981), from 1971 to 1979 public school enrollment, K-12, declined 9.8 per cent, a precipitious drop that has created a number of serious problems for schools in general and for urban schools in particular. (See Abramowitz & Rosenfeld, 1978; Bins & Townsel, 1978)

If one is looking for more students in public schools, figures indeed are gloomy. Public school enrollment, K-12, stood at 41.5 million in September of 1979 (latest NCES figures), the lowest it has been since 1972, when the decline began (NCES, 1980). More specifically, elementary school enrollment stands at 24,824,000, a drop of over 9 per cent in the last decade, and the secondary figure is 16,718,000, a drop of almost 8 per cent in the same period.

Not every area of the country, not every state has borne the same burden of decline, of course. Some states showed increases from 1971-1979, while others dropped only 5-9.9 per cent. However, in twelve states, enrollment dropped 15 per cent or more, and all of these states were in the East or Midwest. (Education Daily, 1981). In addition, some major cities within the Midwest

are showing enrollment figures that are even lower than that average. Working with data compiled by the Council of Great City Schools (1980), for example, we see that enrollments in public schools of major Midwestern cities from 1972-1978 slipped by the following percentages:

Chicago	10.6
Cleveland	31.8
Detroit	19.7
Memphis	18.4
Milwaukee	25.4
Minneapolis	25.9
Nashville	13.5
St. Louis	29.8
Toledo	21.

Working with data supplied by the State Departments of Education for states in the Urban Education Network, we find that K-12 public school enrollments declined for the 10 year period 1970-71 to 1980-81 by these percentages:

Illinois	16.5
Indiana	14.3
Iowa	19.2
Kentucky	05.75
Michigan	17.4
Minnesota	17.1
*Missouri	15.
Nebraska	20.5
Ohio	19.3
Tennessee	05.
Wisconsin	16.7

*Accumulated enrollment available only; the totals may reflect a double count.

Many researchers note that the current decline in enrollment must be placed in the context of a previous "boom" for its full effect to be appreciated. (See Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Davis & Lewis, 1978; Dembowski, Gay, & Owings, 1979.) From 1950 to 1970, they point out, because of a post-war "baby boom" elementary school enrollment rose from 22 million to 37 million, while secondary school enrollment climbed from 6.5 million to almost 15 million, or double its original figure (Davis & Lewis, 1978). Bolstered by a healthy economy, and supported by demographics, the "business of education" blossomed in these years: teachings increased, schools multiplied, and new programs were inaugurated. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA, 1976) points out that the federal funds for education increased 20 per cent from 1950 to 1970, while state funding in that period increased enormously--by more than 700 per cent.

Then quite suddenly, it seemed, the birth rate dropped, taking both demographers and school administrators by surprise (Davis & Lewis, 1978; Vigilante, 1979). Fishlow (1978), among others, has charted the decline in births. The birth rate, she notes, peaked in 1957 but dropped quickly through the mid-'60s; in 1967 alone there was a 7 per cent drop in live births from the previous year. The result was that in a single decade--from 1964 to 1974--births declined from over 4 million to 3.2 million per year, or a drop of 20 per cent nationwide. Naturally, public school enrollment was soon affected--as early as 1968 in the early grades, as a matter of fact. As Table 1 shows, public school enrollment began to drop noticeably in the early '70s,

ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY DAY SCHOOL:FALL 1966 TO FALL 1977

	in thousands
1966	43,039
1967	43,891
1968	44,944
1969	45,619
1970	45,909
1971	46,081
1972	45,744
1973	45,429
1974	45,053
1975	44,791
1976	44,317
1977	43,731

(Source: W.V. Grant & C.G. Lind, Digest of Educational Statistics, 1979, National Center of Educational Statistics, 1979)

TABLE 1

showing a decline from 46 million students in 1970 to 43.7 million in 1977. Even demographers had not expected a decline that sharp and that sudden.

By the late '60s, researchers assert, the die was cast. Given the climate of early expansion, school districts had built, recruited, and staffed themselves into a situation from which they could not easily be extricated. Had the predictions been more accurate, had administrators been more willing to credit the demographic evidence, they were still already committed by mind set to expansion and by capital budgets to tenured staffs and new facilities. Again and again research points out that boom and decline simply followed too fast on each other to allow for comfortable adjustment (Davis & Lewis, 1978; NSPRA, 1976).

The importance of "mind set" is one reason that an effort is being made now to prepare educators for future enrollments. Turning to that picture, we see that the outlook for the future is somewhat more sanguine. (See Davis & Lewis, 1978; Fishlow, 1978; and Frankel & Harrison, 1977.) Based on projected birth rates, enrollment at the elementary school level is expected to go up in the late 1980s, although there is difference of opinion as to how much enrollment will incline. A brief summary of how enrollments are projected will clarify the issue.

The National Center for Education Statistics periodically releases statistics for a ten-year period that include projected enrollments. (See Frankel &

Harrison, 1977.) These projections show high, intermediate, and low alternatives based on different assumed fertility rates, or births per thousands of women. Generally the assumption is that the intermediate alternative (2.1 births per woman) is most likely.

Kirst and Garms (1980), of Stanford University, prefer the low alternative (1.7 births per woman), "based on the fact that the low level of fertility has persisted for more years than most experts believed it would" (p. 9). Using Census Bureau population projections, the data from NCES projections, and the technical method for projecting used by NCES, Kirst and Garms project that K-8 enrollment will continue to decline until about 1987, and then turn upwards slightly, with about a 4 percent increase to 1990.

The National Center for Educational Statistics bases its projection on an assumption of 2.1 births per woman, or the intermediate level (Frankel and Harrison, 1977). Based on that assumption, enrollment figures for K-8 will be higher (by about two million) than the Kirst and Garms projection. All agree elementary-school increases will still not be felt until the late 1980s, and then in the early grades first.

Kirst and Garms expect high-school enrollment, which dropped sharply after 1976, to decline continuously through the '80s but to maintain a plateau position from 1983-1986. This is substantially the same as the NCES projection (Frankel and Harrison, 1977), since the figure is based on births that have already occurred.

Although enrollment will go up slightly at the end of the '80s, Kirst and Garms remind us that figures will not be anything like those of the boom years, and that, overall, we are still in a decline position. In a particularly succinct summary of the situation, they state:

> The data show that total K-12 enrollment, which peaked at 51.3 million in 1971, will be less than 43 million by 1990. This is a 17% decrease in enrollment in a 20 year period. K-8 enrollment peaked in 1969, and by 1990 will have decreased 17%; 9-13 enrollment peaked in 1976 and will have decreased 24% by 1990. Solely during the 1980s, the elementary schools will decrease in enrollment by one million students, a decrease of 3%, while the high schools will decrease by 2.6 million, or 18% of 1980 enrollment. Proportionately, the high school loss of enrollment during the decade will be six times as great as the loss at the elementary level. (p. 13)

Looking at the picture from a more positive point of view, Davis and Lewis want educators to be prepared for the increases that will occur, however slight:

> If the populations forecasts are reasonable, school administrators will have to plan the provision of staff and facilities for slight increases of kindergarten enrollment beginning as early as 1980. Increased enrollments will appear in the first grade in the following year and in the higher grades in succeeding years. Increased enrollments in the early grades will begin and run for some years in the midst of general decline in K-8 enrollments. School administrators will have to communicate this two-way dynamic to school boards to ensure provisions of adequate resources. (p. 22. Underscoring ours)

The consensus seems to be that if the causes of changes in enrollment are better understood, they may be anticipated and prepared for with a mind-set and budget that takes the new situation into account. Understanding the causes of decline and attempting to apply this understanding to the local situation is the focus of the next section.

Causes of Declining Enrollments

The causes of a change in enrollment are more complex than they might at first seem. Demographers point out that the components of any population change are the birth, death, and migration rates in a given period of time. However, the total number of births in any given year itself depends on two factors--the total number of women in childbearing years (ages 15-44) and their fertility rates, or numbers of births per thousand women (Davis & Lewis, 1978). Although the number of women in child-bearing years can be accurately determined, it is the fertility rate that is the more volatile factor, for it is subject to influence from factors like the economy, political climate, concern about overpopulation, changing social mores, and the like (Davis & Lewis, 1978; Fishlow, 1978; National School Public Relations Association, 1976). Thus, although the number of women in childbearing years may be high in a given period of time, the fertility rate may be low. In point of fact, aside from the 1940s and 1950s, the fertility rate, or number of children per woman, has been declining since the 1920s.

Fishlow (1978) suggests that the recent decline in fertility beginning in the mid-'60s can be attributed to three major factors: lack of opportunity for economic advance, which bears most heavily on the young, perhaps; and the extension to women of "the long-time American ideal of individualism, and possibly the intensification of this ideal among men" (p. 62). By "individualism," Fishlow means "the belief that adults should determine their own fates and that they have the right to pursue self-fulfillment through a

wide range of choices" (p. 62). She goes on to note that one manifestation of this individualism is an increased questioning (perhaps rejection) of the desirability of marriage and childbearing, especially as an exclusive goal for women in child-bearing years. Kirst and Garms (1980), citing data from a World Fertility Survey reported in Scientific American, believe that the depressed fertility rate is the result of later marriage, but that the principal reason is simply that people want to have smaller families. Others like Davis and Lewis believe that young people's willingness to postpone marriage--wherein most births occur--is particularly responsible for the depressed birth rate. Other factors mentioned frequently are changes in employment of either husband or wife, changes in womens' work roles, in career aspirations for women, the more liberal abortion laws and the availability of contraception (Davis & Lewis, 1978; Kirst & Garms, 1980).

Migration is another factor that affects population shifts and bears on enrollment changes--in fact, the National School Boards Association (NSBA, 1976) believes that migration causes most of the local fluctuations (see also Fishlow, 1978, and Bishop, 1979). Besides moving from the Northeast and Midwest sections of the country, the population is continuing to move from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas at a rate that can only drive enrollment further down in central cities (Bins & Townsel, 1978; Davis & Lewis, 1978; Kirst & Garms, 1980). In addition, studying an Educational Research Survey of enrollment changes in the largest cities, the National School Public Relations Association (1976) concludes that the nature of the district--urban, suburban, rural--is more liable to influence enrollment

change than is the district's geography (Sunbelt or Frostbelt, for example). Other factors that must be considered in reading the statistics, according to studies, are the number of high-school drop-outs and the movement of pupils from public to non-public schools (Minnesota State Department of Education, 1978; Illinois State Board of Education, 1980). From the positive point of view, the U.S. House of Representatives (1981) reports that the number of legal and illegal immigrants into cities is growing and may become an important factor in future growth.

Finally, in looking for causes of the decline (and anticipating future changes), the NSBA (1976) believes individual districts should consider whether they have experienced these phenomena:

- loss of jobs in the area, due to major businesses or industries moving out;
- a slow down in previous industrial or business growth;
- zoning policies that inhibit new housing young families can afford;
- lending or tax policies that encourage housing development farther out in the suburbs;
- highway construction that makes non-city living more attractive;
- an increase in the numbers of senior citizens who, for economic reasons, choose to remain in housing that might otherwise be occupied by young people with children;
- fair-housing laws that make it possible for minority groups to finally acquire housing in the suburbs;
- desire to avoid integrating neighborhoods;
- loss of confidence in a district's schools and a desire to live in a jurisdiction where educational services are perceived as better. (pp. 5-6)

Effects of Declining Enrollments and Retrenchment

A review of the literature on declining enrollments encourages us to separate discussion of the problem along five lines or areas of interest where its effects will be felt. These are the areas of finance, programs, staff, facilities, and public or community involvement, particularly with respect to closings. It is important to note at the outset that research indicates that effects are not universally felt, nor are they always negative (State of Illinois, 1975; Wilken and Callahan, 1978). Indeed, effects vary considerably from state to state, from district to district. What does seem to be true is that some change will be brought about in the district by the decline in the numbers of pupils, and more often than not, that change will involve retrenchment, especially for urban districts. We make no claim here either that declining enrollment is the sole cause of the effects we are considering--only that research indicates these are the conditions that most often accompany declining enrollment and retrenchment in general, and that these conditions must first be understood if they are to be managed.

Finance. School district administrators seem to agree that they will first feel the effects of declining enrollment in the area of finance, as budgets shrink while enrollments decrease. In a survey conducted by the National School Boards Associaion, administrators indicated that reduction in aid "far outranked any other single effect of declining enrollments in severity" (NSPRA, 1976, p. 10).

The subject of school finance, related to enrollment and otherwise, has received increasing attention in research, particularly from Allen Odden (1979, 1978, 1976); Hentschke and Yagielski (1981); Kirst and Garms, (1980); Leppert and Routh (1978); and in the several finance reports published by the Education Commission of the States. In brief, researchers note that a district's finances are more likely to be affected by decreased enrollments as these conditions obtain:

1) If revenue from state or federal aid is closely tied to average daily attendance (ADA);

2) if declining enrollment is accompanied by population loss, thus eroding the local tax base; and especially

3) if the decline is accompanied by the rise in cost of several line items in the budget, in response to inflation.

With respect to state aid, or the first condition, it should be understood that the aid local districts receive from states is usually tied to average daily attendance; hence, as numbers of pupils go down, so state aid decreases. Another problem is that as enrollments go down, so per pupil valuations rise, resulting in a decrease in state supplemental aid. This is a double bind referred to by Berman and McLaughlin (1977) and Leppert and Routh (1978). Further, the latter note, district ties to state aid may be very close--that is, in over one-half the states they investigated, the state share of non-federal revenue for school support was 50 percent or more. Unless reforms are introduced, these states, they explain, will be more adversely affected by the condition of reduced enrollment than those states not so closely tied.

With reference to equity reform, more than 30 states have taken action to reduce the disparities in district per-pupil expenditures (Education

Commission of the States, 1981.) However, the reform itself can introduce problems, as the Commission points out:

> A solution to one set of problems, finance reform, is also a contributor to two others. It contributes to the general resource shortage problem because it requires higher state subsidies--sometimes twice as much as the old formula required. It contributes to control problems because it shifts financial power from the local level to the state level. And where financial power goes, a certain amount of control goes, too. (p. 11)

To gain perspective on how reduced aid affects districts, we might note a few responses by 39 districts surveyed by Education U.S.A and reported in Declining Enrollment: Current Trends in School Policies and Programs (NSPRA, 1976). Here we read, for instance, that the Vinton, Iowa schools lost $1,236 for every pupil dropped; in Goodland, Kansas, the cut was $1,012 per student. Livonia, Michigan, public school officials said that pupils retained gained the district $280, but because of the way state aid is drawn, when the schools lost a child, the loss was $1,115. More recently, the Education Commission of the States reports that an informal poll on priority issues in education revealed finance to be the top concern of two-thirds of the nation's school superintendents, legislators, and state-education coordinators.

An eroding tax base is particularly liable to affect central cities, reflecting the loss of industry and out-migration of middle and high income families, Bins and Townsel (1978) and others explain. They point out that big cities must provide large numbers of people with a variety of services like police, hospital, fire, health and sanitation--and that all of these services, including education, must compete for the same dollars. In addition, the

rising rate of inflation makes all of these services more expensive to provide. Educators also note the reluctance on the part of our aging population to finance public schools and the decline of faith in all institutions (Bakalis, 1981; Stefonek, 1979).

In addition, in his review, Stefonek notes that according to Charles Levine, author of Cutback Management In an Era of Scarcity (n.d.), taxpayers are reluctant to "continue or increase high levels of support through high levels of taxation for services which are often perceived as unnecessary, ineffective, inefficient, or contrary to acceptable public policy" (p. 14).

According to Levine, several factors enter into this resistance movement: the difficulty of proving program effectiveness; the backlash against increasingly militant unionized public employees; a belief that bureaucracies are less concerned with problem resolution than with their own survival; and an ingrained suspicion that the poor and minorities have not made a genuine effort to improve their lot. Still another factor Levine cites is the public's recognition that the nation as a whole cannot continue to support unlimited growth and thus the "bigger and better" concept is being challenged (Stefonek, 1979).

The general public may believe that as pupil numbers decrease, costs will automatically go down. However, this is not always the case. As Leppert and Routh (1978) explain:

> The fundamental problem is that the cost of delivering educational services does not diminish in direct proportion to the loss of students. For example, building maintenance varies only slightly as a school's enrollment increases or decreases. Utilities, if anything, continue to spiral upward. A teaching load reduction from 30 to 28 students should not necessitate a reduction in school building force. The equipment required for group instruction changes little. Experimental programs, often created out of surplus funds from increased enrollments, are still considered important to improve the quality of instruction. Demands for continued research and long-term development in such areas as curriculum innovation, assessment, accounting, and competency-based evaluation must be met to establish cost levels. Administrative and supervisory costs tend to be fixed or to increase. The largest cost item, teachers' salaries, increases rapidly as the staff, with little turnover, gains experience and advanced degrees. (p. 206)

Wilken and Callahan (1978) emphasize that the combination of factors is more debilitating to a school district's budget than the single phenomenon of declining enrollment. In fact, they assert that there is no proven one-to-one correlation between declining enrollment and a drastic change in educational expenditures. States with declining enrollment, they show, display the same percentage of increased costs as states with rising enrollment, for the years 1972-1976. "While frustrating to some," they write, "the lack of one-to-one correspondence between changes in enrollment and movement of school expenditures has been the result of at least four influences: rising prices; rising professional employment; fixed charges; and service-delivery methods" (p. 259). (See also Hentschke & Yagielski, 1981.) Wilken and Callahan believe districts should emphasize to the public the fact that retrenchment is related to other factors besides declining enrollment.

The point is that during the years of 1971-1981, while enrollments have fallen, the total expenditures and per pupil expenditures have been rising. From the standpoint of local district decision-makers, it would seem to matter little whether retrenchment is driven by reduced numbers, increased prices, or less money from the states. In every instance, belts must be tightened, and monies withheld from one area and allocated to another.

Programs. Declining enrollment and entrenchment also affect the sort and quality of programs a school district can offer. Of the 39 school districts surveyed by Education Today (NSPRA, 1976), 20 reported cutting staff and programs, as opposed to closing schools, for instance, as a first step in cutting costs. Keough (1978) maintains that most districts prefer to close facilities, but many are forced to phase out programs because public sentiment against school closing is so strong. Further, he suggests that program cuts, in particular, tend to be poorly decided upon, since they are frequently made as a last resort, and only after the community has rejected the plan to close the facility.

The issue of the nature of program cuts has not been widely addressed in research literature, but William Keough (1978), then Superintendent of Schools in New Bedford, Massachusetts, is one of those who has done so. Also, Dembowski, Gay, and Owings (1979) undertook a review of the effects of declining enrollments on instructional programs and supervisory practices for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. A summary of their findings was published in Education Leadership, November, 1980.

According to Keough, program reduction usually results in the withdrawal of elementary-level special progams first, specifically art, music, and physical education. Support personnel for reading, guidance, library, and media may soon follow. At the secondary level, he finds, the electives are usually the first to be dropped, including low-interest subjects such as Spanish or calculus. He notes that the coordinator of the program may also be terminated, resulting in the program's "slow death by neglect" (p. 353).

Local reports support Keough's general views. Ellen Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent of Programs Division, the San Diego School District, stated that in 1978, after Proposition 13 was passed, "Summer school programs previously available to all pupils were limited to pupils needing to meet the basic skills competency requirements and to seniors needing credit for graduation" (Budget Cuts, 1981). Although Sanchez feels that San Diego Schools have generally avoided massive cuts in the instructional programs, she said that "pupils are forced to restrict their programs to meet the basic requirements at the cost of enrichment courses and advanced courses in such areas as art, music and foreign language" (Ibid).

Dembowski, Gay, and Owings, surveying the effects of decline on 96 districts of different sizes, found it was not only subjects like music, art, or calculus that suffered. Rather, they found that: "With few exceptions, as enrollments declined, changes in course enrollments followed a typical pattern--the academic core subjects were overall 'losers' with science and

social studies in declining districts showing statistically significant student enrollment decreases when compared to increasing enrollment districts" (p. 174). Other decreases were observed in math, foreign languages, and fine arts.

Although they believe attrition is responsible for some of this decrease, Dembowski, Gay, and Owings suggest that the causes for the decline reflect a lack of interest in these subjects among students and a lowering of the requirements for graduation--particularly in the case of social studies--by state departments. They also found enrollments in vocational subjects to have risen in all districts. Overall, they found, declining enrollment districts "greatly reduced" the number of courses actually taught. They also suggest that districts are mimimizing their educational services and options to the "academically oriented" student.

Program quality remains an elusive variable to measure precisely. In their study, Dembowski, Gay, and Owings related the materials replacement cycle to program quality and found that in declining-enrollment districts, "the length of the materials replacement cycle had either remained the same or lengthened, while it shortened in districts with increasing enrollments" (1980, p. 173). Relating the drop-out rate to program quality, they found that districts with greater decline showed a greater drop-out rate than did districts with increasing numbers.

Interestingly, Wilken and Callahan (1978), surveying 55 school districts in Iowa, found that most of the respondants believed the enrollment decline had a greater adverse affect on the quality of classroom instruction overall than on specific components. However, districts with increasing enrollments also believed services have been deteriorating. This leads Wilken and Callahan to conclude that deteriorating program quality should not be related solely to declining enrollments. On the other hand, Dembowski, Gay, and Owings found that neither inclining nor declining districts believed student population changes had affected the quality of their educational programs. In a commentary on their own study, these researchers suggested declining enrollments is coinciding with a conservative mood in education that has led to a reduction in social studies and fine arts courses (Gay, Dembowski, and McLennan, 1981). This kind of variation indicates how subjective the issues remains.

Another effect mentioned in the literature, especially in case studies of specific districts, is increased class size and increased teacher workload. In a study of the effects of retrenchment in three New York City schools, researchers report: "Unanimously, our respondents agreed that class sizes have expanded to a point that makes effective instruction extremely difficult. The New York City teachers' contract specifies a maximum class size of 34, but there are academic classes enrolling up to 60 students" (Duke, Cohen, and Herman, 1981, p. 14).

There has been some discussion of the positive effects of declining enrollments on instruction. For example, 53 per cent of districts surveyed in Iowa

by Wilken and Callahan determined the effect to be "inconsequential" on quality; 15 per cent said "somewhat helpful or generally helpful"; 20 per cent said "somewhat harmful" and 13 per cent ("disproportionately classroom teachers") said "generally harmful" (p.293). Their survey led the researchers to conclude that "declining enrollment can result in the erosion of service of quality, but not nearly to the degree that some believe" (p. 293). In general, they note, the falling numbers have not affected curriculum programs to the extent of the popular belief. To bolster that argument, they point to the state of Minnesota which reported in 1976 that while there have been cuts in staff, there have not been cuts in programs. Rather, local districts are offering courses for half years only, or in single semesters.

Again, although criticized for its small sample size (see Dembowski, Gay, & Owings, 1979), a study of Colorado's school districts found that the greater the decrease of a district's enrollment, the lower its drop-out rate and the higher its achievement scores (Roedeckohr, 1974). It may be that the improved test scores are a function of greater attention from individual teachers and more competitiveness among a smaller population, Wilken and Callahan suggest.

In a ten year period, Salt Lake City closed 24 schools, as its enrollment dropped from 43 to 23 thousand students. The end result has been that new programs have been incorporated and the level of basic skills has risen from below the national average to several months ahead (Fowler, 1980). In that particular district, although the focus of programs has narrowed to the required curriculum, consolidation has allowed pooling of discretionary

funds to develop compensatory programs for the gifted, the hiring of full-time librarians at every school, and increased subsidiary services and inservices for teachers and administrators.

A fair conclusion from research seems to be that although programs will be affected by declining enrollment, that effect will vary from district to district. It also seems fair to agree with the analysis that enrollments threaten to reduce the number and variety of programs a district can offer (State of Illinois, 1975), particularly in the academic core areas, foreign languages, and fine arts, and to increase class size, especially in urban districts.

Staff. Another area responsive to changes in enrollment and finance is staff management. As the number of students declines, the number of teachers allowed in the state aid formula is reduced, and so the necessity of reducing the staff is introduced. The complexities attendant on reduction--maintaining union contracts, affirmative action guidelines, program necessities, and attempting to reassign staff--make it particularly difficult to manage. William Keough spoke to school administrators in his district about the issues. "Of all the adverse consequences caused by the shift in enrollment patterns, problems in the area of personnel management were reportedly the most pervasive and difficult to resolve," he notes (p. 165).

Some of the personnel problems derive from the effects of retrenchment on staff. According to research, retrenchment intensifies negative, counter-productive personnel attitudes, regardless of whether actual lay-offs occur or not. Among the counter-productive attitudes mentioned in the literature are confusion as rumors run rampant, lowered staff morale, and greater anxiety over job security (Bakalis, 1981; Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Dembowski, Gay and Owings, 1979; Keough, 1978). Distrust and disruption in a faculty can last over two years, even if positive steps are taken, these last researchers note. If reductions ensue, there also can arise conflicting loyalties for one teacher and another and a concern for a "safety net" for those released.

Similarly, a freeze on hiring at the district level constrains professional mobility at the district level, as Keough points out. This, in turn, means fewer professional ladders for teachers to climb--a fact that may influence the morale for the worse. In addition, teachers and administrators usually take on additional work during the period of cut-back, often without extra pay. This practise induces job stress and abets teacher "burn out" (Bumstead, 1981; Duke et al., 1981).

Actual case studies of the effects of retrenchment on staff are rare, which makes the ones that have been done the more valuable. One of these is the recent study of three New York City schools conducted by Duke, Cohen, and

Herman (1981). Their findings indicate that as finances decline the effects on staff are severe. Thus, three out of four teachers whom the researchers interviewed said they were responsible for more clerical chores and custodial duties than they were five years ago; their classs sizes had expanded; and their paraprofessional help had been reduced. It is worth noting that the teachers said they consequently cut back on homework, essay questions, tests, and even one-to-one contact with the students. (See also Bumstead, 1981.) Administrative and supervisory staff were also hard hit, with many supporting positions--truant officers, counselors, chair-persons--eliminated completely.

One of the most disquieting findings of the Duke, Cohen, and Herman study is that retrenchment has fueled an intense competition among schools and staffs for the remaining resources. Competition is intense among teachers for the smaller classes and the more able students, researchers found. Also, teachers registered resentment at the seeming arbitrary allocation of materials and at being asked to "cover" for a colleague's absence. Teachers who had not been asked to make input into reduction decisions also said they consequently felt "relatively powerless" to influence the conditions under which they were required to work. They thus saw themselves as pitted against their administrators.

Finally, these researchers found that as teachers were forced to wait to qualify for early retirement or non-teaching jobs, they adopted strategies that created new problems--for example, 30% were "moonlighting" at a second job; absenteeism had risen; more than 25% said they had cut back on extracurricular

activities (on school committees or supervising students) in view of their increased workloads.

From the administration's viewpoint, actually reducing the staff--laying off personnel--is the most difficult management problem decline presents. However, just as school districts are not experiencing declining enrollments at the same rate, so they are not reducing staff at the same rate. Reports from the Urban Education Program fellows illustrate the variance. Indianapolis, for example, has reduced its staff by 550 for 1981-1982--a very high figure; yet Wichita, where decline has been slight, has not been forced to terminate at all; attrition has taken care of its problem. At this writing, the same is true for Minneapolis. Des Moines experienced its first year of layoff in 1981-1982, with 95 teachers laid off. St. Louis, on the other hand, experiencing a spurt of enrollment greater than projected, may have to call teachers back.

Oftentimes the seniority method that districts use to reduce staff can itself cause problems (Dembowski, Gay, and Owings, 1979; Murnane, 1980; Rosenberg, 1978). For one, reduction by the seniority method may affect the racial balance of staff, who may have been hired under the recent affirmative action programs (Rosenberg, 1978; State of Illinois, 1975). Another problem occurs when a senior teacher "bumps" a younger, more popular, or better teacher. Wilken and Callahan (1978) tell the story of one teacher in vocational education whose position was eliminated but whose satus was senior to other employees. "By previous agreement," they note, "he was eligible to teach his

certified minor subject, English, if there were a less senior teacher in that area. Therefore, even though he had never taught English, he not only bumped a less senior English teacher, but also became department chairman because of his overall level of tenure" (p. 270). (See also Keough, 1978; NSPRA, 1976.)

Finally, letting go the most junior faculty first has serious programmatic implications, Dembowski and Gay (1980) believe. They point out that most studies investigating teacher characteristics and their effects on student achievement assert that teacher years of experience and teacher age have a negative or neutral correlation with student achievement. That is to say, "as teachers obtain more years of experience, student achievement rises to a peak and then begins to fall" (p. 174). Thus, Dembowski and Gay believe that an aging staff "could, over time, result in reduced overall student achievement within an entire district" (p. 174; see also Keough, 1978, and Fishlow, 1978). An aging staff may then require more staff development. Interestingly, over 85% of those responding to the ASCD survey offer inservice teachers, Dembowski, Gay and Owings note. However, it is not clear if this inservice is in response only to the "aging staff" syndrome.

It may be that the future will be brighter for urban schools now facing reductions in force, if enrollments rise as predicted. In general, teacher supply in the past has been one step behind demand. That is, when enrollments burgeoned in the late '60s, the supply of teachers was too small. By the time teacher supply had grown to keep pace, however, enrollments had begun to shrink (NCES,1980). Now, however, if enrollment predictions hold (and one

must remember the volatility of the fertility rates), it may be that teachers will again be in demand in the late '80s, especially for the elementary grades and for areas of vocational education, special education, and minimum competency (Dembowski, Gay, and Owings, 1979). In August of 1981, in fact, NCES reported "spot shortages" geographically and in some fields of study such as special education, bilingual education, mathematics and science ("School Districts," 1981). Still, reseach indicates we will not return to the earlier numbers of students, nor are there sure indications that the other causes of retrenchment (inflation, lack of federal funding, increased municipal fiscal needs) will ease. In addition, with teachers leaving the field on account of "burn-out," poor pay, and other reasons, the competency of those teachers left in the schools has emerged as a concern. It seems fair to say that whatever solutions are posed by districts, they can ony be implemented by long-range planning that takes into acount staffing realities that retrenchment has brought to the fore.

Facility Management. The National School Public Relations Association (1976) has identified these facility-related problems that crop up as retrenchment advances:

> . excess buildings
> . excess rooms in yet-needed buildings
> . excess space or land purchased in the pre-decline period (p. 21)

Naturally, these problems may surface for reasons other than declining enrollments. Alvin E. Morris (1977), superintendent of the Wichita Public

School System, has determined that facility-related problems may emerge for either external or internal reasons. Among the external factors he notes are urban renewal clearance, federal highway project condemnation, and building code requirements. Internal factors that might bring about a change in facilities are obsolete, or inadequate buildings, integration programs affecting the number of buildings needed, and consolidation of several attendance uses. The city of Akron, for example, reports closing its schools for several reasons besides declining enrollments: age and condition of buildings, and urban change, or commercial development of an area that excludes residential use and limits its access to pupils (Akron Public Schools, 1976).

Excess buildings, rooms, and space ultimately mean that districts must answer two questions, say Bins and Townsel (1978): Should schools be closed? Which schools should be closed? The answers to such questions are not self-evident by any means, especially for urban districts. Cibulka (1981), who studied school closings in nine major cities, found that, in general, too many buildings were kept open in city schools after decline began--and, in fact, the number of facilities and classrooms increased. He notes that in Chicago, for example, as of 1980, 25 attempts had been made to close schools with only six successes, and, in fact, total space increased. Cibulka lays the increased space to the growth during the last decade of non-discretionary programs in special education, bilingual education and Title I ESEA Programs, many of which required special teachers and classrooms. Neighborhood

pressures, agreements with unions that limited class size, and emphasis on open space and magnet schools are other reasons for additional money and space being allocated in the big cities in the 1970s, he asserts.

This is not to say, however, that closing a school is actually the decision that is always financially or politically soundest. Sometimes, it seems, marginal schools are kept open because the savings realized would not be that great, or because community pressures to retain the buildings are too strong to resist (Bins & Townsel, 1978; Hechinger, 1981). In addition, many writers urge districts to lease buildings rather than to sell them, if at all possible, especially if enrollments are expected to rise in that district.

Some urban districts have curtailed service rather than close schools. Metropolitan Nashville (1980) notes that custodians who usually service 15 thousand feet new serve 18 thousand; in recent years, no principal's requests for building modifications have been honored; improvements like asphalt resurfacing have been sharply curtailed. The New York City Schools painted only 10 of their 1 thousand school buildings last year, the Times has noted. At that rate, buildings will be painted only once every hundred years! (Kleiman, 1980).

Districts who must close schools face a delicate, time-consuming and complex task. As the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments notes, "Although school building closings may appear to be a routine, data-based procedure, in

fact, the process demands the utmost skill, care and effort on the part of the administrators and school board in planning, public relations and community involvment" (p. 38). This is a view echoed by virtually all writers on the topic, especially Bailey (1977), Eisenberger (1976, 1977), Estes (1977), and Keough (1978). The process is particularly difficult, they note, because as it gets under way, district managers must monitor key elements like enrollment projections, program changes, staffing reassignments, and final disposition of the building itself, all the while taking care to make sure that staff and community concerns are heard. Given this agenda, it may indeed easier to build a school than to close one, as Bins and Townsel assert.

Urban districts, in particular, tend to face a set of factors that will inhibit the success of school closings, certain researchers find. Research by Colton and Frelich (1979) illustrates the problem. Studying how St. Louis handled school closings in the past decade, these researchers found that, like Chicago, St. Louis eschewed closing schools, despite financial benefits that might have been realized. For one thing, the researchers found, the impetus to close was constrained by the commitment to the policy of the neighborhood school concept. That is, closings tended to occur in neighborhoods of "dubious vitality" where students could be reassigned to nearby schools. On the other hand, uneconomic schools tended to be kept open simply because nearby schools could not accept their pupils. For another, Colton and Frelich found that the system's bureaucratic structure and procedure "gave an advantage" to building level administrators, who wanted to preserve low levels of building

utilization. That is to say, principals in St. Louis saw excess space as an advantage and were able to manipulate data on building utilization, while an absence of systematic data gathering base at the top helped the principals hide the surplus space. This finding, they note, substantiates the earlier work of Lineberry (1977), who suggests that decision rules are actually made far down the bureaucratic ladder, and that an important determinant of these rules is the low-level executive's definition of the situation.

This same bureaucratic structure in St. Louis, the researchers suggest, inhibited the coordination of the different kinds of information that is so necessary to the decision-making process for school closings. According to this study, cost information and building utilization information, for example, were often blended, thus blunting their impact. As a result, the financial dimensions of the situation never came into focus, and the aggregate savings that might accompany closure were not computed.

Colton and Frelich note that there are signs of change in St. Louis--that information systems and collection recommended by consultants are now being put into effect. But more to the point, policy-watchers like Iannacone (1979) believe that "low quality level of data collection, information analysis, and information delivery...is characteristic of the largest city school districts" (p. 423). Indeed, Iannacone asserts that the "Colton/Frelich article [is] squarely in the mainstream of the general research on the organization and politics of large-city school districts" (p. 423). If this is true, remedying

this situation may be a particularly important challenge for urban districts to face in the '80s.

Community Involvement. One of the most difficult aspects of managing decline is perhaps mobilizing community support for changes that must occur and the maintaining positive public relations. This is particularly true during the period when schools must be closed. Feelings run strong during the entire process, especially on the part of parents who may feel a personal identification with the structures that are being shuttered. For many parents, the school itself represents their strongest sphere of influence in the community and their point of reference to the world at large. (See Eisenberger, 1976, 1977, and Sieradski, 1975.) Thus, it is little wonder that virtually all the writers on the topic point to the importance of involving the community in the decision-making process of closing the schools. Indeed, they say, a number of practitioner case studies indicate that serious problems result when district responses are made behind closed doors or in executive sessions (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Eisenberger, 1977). This also corroborates the Colton/Frelich findings referred to earlier. Berman and McLaughlin, in particular, believe that "top-down" management erodes community support. They also believe that "crisis-oriented" management tends to result in overall deficient planning.

The following key questions are advanced by Berman and McLaughlin to develop the structures so necessary for participation:

> What kinds of structural arrangements can support meaningful participation of staff and community in district decision making? To what extent does increased participation mean shared power? What kinds of authority should be delegated? What kinds of feedback systems are necessary to ensure the healthy functioning of participatory structures? Who should particpate? How should participants be selected? (p. 29)

To develop structures that will involve the community and also produce intelligent decisions about the multitude of issues that impinge on closings, researchers agree on the need for a master plan, one that is based not solely on short-term needs, but one that looks to the future as well (Keough, 1977, 1978; Sieradski, 1975; Wholeben, 1980). Such a plan should address several issues, they point out: the development of procedures and processes that accounts for community and staff input; the development of criteria for determining which schools to close; the disposition of the schools themselves--that is, whether they should be leased or sold outright. If schools are not closed, the appropriate use of the surplus space must also be considered. In addition, the literature is persuasive that districts need to develop a long-term plan for renewing community interest and gaining support for schools. Such a plan must carry districts <u>beyond</u> the trauma of closing the school to building consensus for new plans.

There are indications that engaging the public will be particularly difficult in the '80s. Researchers noted that the number of childless taxpayers is rising; Dembowski, Gay, and Owings (1979) foresee that if this group organizes against education, they could have a serious impact

on monies education receives. They note that Campbell argued in 1974 that the political strength of public education is decreasing and will continue to do so for these reasons:

1. Shifts in the U.S. population characteristics (i.e. greater numbers of aged populations demanding more public services) whose funding is in direct competition with education.

2. Public opinion polls showing that since 1969, a decline in support for public education among its traditionally strongest supporters (high SES and education persons) is evident.

3. School enrollment declines coincide with public discussion on research showing little relationship between spending increases for education and student achievement. (Dembowski, Gay and Owings p. 11)

Bakalis, too, has very recently written eloquently about the effects of decline in "American Education and the Meaning of Scarcity" (1981). There, he notes:

> This is a time of high anxiety with a widespread sense that things are out of control--whether it be the mammoth federal budget or the smallest of our children. In such a time people project blame and disavow responsibility; since the education establishment has occupied such a revered place in terms of what the public believed it could do, it is not surprising that it has increasingly become the national scapegoat. If our schools are not viewed as the cause of all our problems, they are all too often blamed for failing to solve those problems. Americans' attitude toward their schools is analogous to the disappointment we feel when someone we trust, respect, or revere lets us down.

He claims we should forge "bold new strategies" to deal with the new public temper. It is to a consideration of these that we will return in the next section of this paper.

II. EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH DECLINE

Having examined the causes and effects of decline on school districts, we turn now to a consideration of some coping strategies that the literature and common practice recommends. The discussion is separated along the five crucial areas: enrollments, programs, staff, facility management, and community involvement, particularly in the closing process. The literature suggests that finance itself, a sixth area affected by decline, will respond best to the combination of the other five being handled well. The reader must remember that we make no claim here to being encyclopedic with reference to strategies; indeed that is not our purpose. Rather we have selected the practices that the literature and the Urban Education Program representatives indicate have been most successful, with the belief that knowledge of the best of strategies will be of the most help to educators facing the plethora of problems decline brings about.

Predicting Accurately

Projecting enrollments accurately is considered crucial to planning for the future at both the district and state level. However, such forecasting is neither easy nor always accurate, since a variety of factors from desegregation efforts to new housing starts can influence the reliability of predictions (King-Stooops & Slaby, 1981; Bishop,

1979). St. Louis, for example, had projected enrollment figures of 57,917 for 1981-1982, but the actual figures are over 60,000 (Smorodin, 1981), an error of almost 3,000.

Such errors are not rare, by any means, according to the literature. Shaw (1980) points out that research concerning accuracy of forecasts is "very meager" and that all methods are susceptible to great error, under certain conditions.

Yet, errors <u>are</u> important: Time and again, those who write about controlling the effects of retrenchment point to the importance of projecting accurately as the first step in developing an intelligent plan for the future (See Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Bishop, 1979; Pitruzello, n.d.; Vigilante, 1980; Wholeben, 1980). Berman and McLaughlin and Vigilante believe the issue is especially pertinent for urban districts, who experience cutback sooner and with greater impact.

The accuracy of projections is directly related to the method that is used to carry them out. Most school districts use the cohort survival method for projecting enrollments: All of the districts that responded to the UEP survey, for example, use this method, sometimes in concert with other techniques. Of the 276 districts responding to a NSPRA survey, 30 use it exclusively, and 45 in combination with another technique. The cohort survival method is one in which the planners

predict the enrollment in a succeeding grade based on the number of students, or the "cohort" for the preceeding year (Vigliante, 1980). Vigilante points out that Engelhardt (1974), Hentschke (1975) and Costaldi (1977), and the New York State Education Department (1974) provide step-by-step methods for using this technique.

The New York State Department warns, however, that "the underlying assumption of the model's applicability is that factors influencing enrollment except births will display future patterns consistent with past patterns. This assumption suggests, for instance, that applying the model to a district experiencing unusual growth or decline would be inappropriate" (p.2).

Robert Shaw (1980) studied the cohort-survival method of projection as it was used in medium, small and large school districts in Missouri. He concluded the following:

> This study strengthens the widely held belief that the Cohort-Survival Method of Projection is best used as a relatively short-range forecast tool where in-migration and out-migration ratios are expected to change at approximately the same rate as they have in the recent past. Stated simply, the Cohort-Survival Method of Enrollment Forecasting should be accurate to the degree that the factors which have affected enrollment positively or negatively in the future continue to influence enrollment to the same degree as in the past. (p. 19)

Just as Shaw suggests the cohort survival method is best used when factors do not change, the NSPRA concludes that many school districts have found that any methods that were accurate in a time of growth are less accurate now. To the

question of what factors should be included, the answers are often vague, because they depend on local community characteristics.

Nonetheless, factors usually mentioned are birth rates, average age of city residents, ethnic composition, in-migration and out-migration, housing patterns, and student drop-out rates. Several writers also mention the usefulness of gathering data on average housing yelds for projection purposes (NSPRA, 1976; Pitruzzello, n.d., Vigilante, 1980).

This is accomplished by making an inventory of all housing units in a district and then gathering statistics on the average number of students each unit yelds (Vigilante). School planners should also take advantage of data on population gathered by county and city planners and utility companies, Pitruzzello advises.

With hopes of helping districts improve their forecasting techniques, Joyce King-Stoops and Robert Slaby (1981) recently studied the enrollment forecasting procedures of 20 school districts in Los Angeles County to determine the answers to four questions:

1. What enrollment forecasting techniques do public school administrators use?
2. Does district enrollment size influence the accuracy of enrollment prediction?
3. Does a rapid increase or decrease in the number of students influence the accuracy of prediction?
4. What characterized those school districts that predicted enrollments most successfully and least successfully?

Their findings of projections made for three years and the data from interviews supported the following conclusions, which answer the questions posed by the study:

1. In the 20 districts that were most or least successful in predicting enrollments, the cohort-survival technique was the most commonly used forecasting method.

2. School districts that predict future enrollments successfully tend to use two separate methods--one at the district office to account for historical enrollment trends and another at the building level to assess the situation in each neighborhood.

3. School districts that predict enrollments successfully despite rapid enrollment change generally combine two forecasting methods.

4. Principals' estimates of future building enrollments are used by successful-prediction districts but not by poor-prediction districts.

5. Successful-prediction school districts tend to consider twice as many local community characteristics and conditions as do poor-prediction districts.

6. Successful-prediction school districts tend to consider the student dropout rate; poor-prediction districts do not.

7. The size of the district does not significantly influence its ability to forecast enrollment accurately.

8. Rapid changes in districtwide student enrollment hinder a district's effort to forecast enrollment accurately (p. 654).

Based on their conclusions, Stoops-King and Slaby developed the following set of guidelines.

Step 1: For greater accuracy in enrollment forecasting, we recommend that the school district adopt two separate enrollment forecasting methods, one at the district level and the second at the building level.

Step 2: We recommend that a district-level method, such as the cohort-survival technique, be used to account for historical enrollment trends and such community variables as housing patterns, family mobility, average age of residents, ethnic composition of the population, private school enrollment rates, and local and statewide birthrates.

Step 3: If a school district is experiencing a rapid change in student enrollment, we recommend that a home survey be conducted in combination with other district-level enrollment projection procedures. The home survey determines the number of students in a given area of the number of dwellings in which these students reside. A numerical yield factor for each type of dwelling can be established from these data. Each home-yield factor is then multiplied by the number of similar dwellings in the total school district to forecast enrollment for the coming year.

Step 4: We recommend that the school-site estimate be developed by the principal, who is best able to recognize and take into account changing conditions at the building level.

Step 5: We recommend that a district-level official review both the district-level enrollment projections and the estimates of building principals before developing the final enrollment estimate for the district. (p. 659)

The information generated by surveys and projections must be integrated into a good plan. Berman and McLaughlin, who believe educators must learn from the past, assert that districts must be alert to the danger of not planning and thus wasting the technological information they gain:

> Yet the problem of recognizing, assessing, and planning for decline is not solved by simply acquiring the needed information or by hiring "demographic specialists." A distinct danger exists that districts and federal and state policymakers will percieve the problem in technological terms, as other issues were so often construed in the recent past. For example, evaluation data generated by local "evaluation specialists" typically have had no effect on school district operations because the system is not organized to use it. For example, although a number of districts--particularly large urban districts--have invested heavily in elaborate research and evaluation units, we have observed few instances in which the resulting analysis significantly influenced day-to-day decisions or even issues of general. For one, the evaluations were not structured in a way that was useful or understandable to district participants. The reports typically were too technical for district trustees and managers to interpret and the data were aggregated at a level that was meaningless to principals and teachers. Second, even if evaluations were presented in an accessible format, few districts have managed to

> coordinate evaluation procedures with decision-making cycles or established appropriate channels for dissemination and discussion of evaluation findings. Consequently, evaluation efforts are typically isolated and unrelated to district policy and practice. Similarly, we would expect that school districts would not apply demographic data in an effective manner unless they change the way they do things. Unfortunately, most school districts are set up to do short-term "crisis management" rather than long-term comprehensive planning. Thus, unless they develop an improved capacity for planning... we anticipate that the typical school district response to even timely and high-quality information about decline is likely to reflect a short-term and technological perspective. (p. 4)

As these researchers and others have noted, gathering the data and becoming technologically more secure only puts administrators on the right path to solving the complex network of problems that enrollment declines and fiscal cutback engenders. Travelling down the road to the solution may be a different matter and a darker journey.

Programs

We discussed earlier the deleterious effects on programs as retrenchment advances: reduction in the number and variety of courses offered, and increased class size. To this must be added the threat to special programs for the disadvantaged, the handicapped, the bilingual students as a result of federal action. What strategies can LEAs employ in the face of these cuts? How can educational programming be managed most wisely?

There is not yet a great deal of literature on the topic of controlling educational program quality during the era of retrenchment--the effects are just now being calculated. Berman and McLaughlin (1977), Keough (1978), and

Wilken and Callahan (1978) are among those who do address the issue, however, and their advice to school administrators is virtually the same: To maintain program quality in the face of retrenchment, districts must try at all costs to ensure that program decisions are based on long-range planning and evaluation efforts that have included setting new district priorities, goals and objectives. Keough notes that the greatest danger to educational quality is "the careless lopping off of staff and/or programs," a haphazard approach to making difficult decisions that have been put off for too long for various reasons. "When school leaders have the time to formulate a plan of program consolidation," he writes, "the result is quite different. Reductions are made with the input and evaluations of many people, phased over a period of years, and constructed so as not to pull a vital link supporting another area" (p. 352-353).

Berman and McLaughlin's advice echoes Keough's. The best approach to managing program contraction--and every other area affected by retrenchment, they believe--is by mobilizing support, implementing the change carefully, and institutionalizing, or integrating change into the system's structure. A revised budgetary process, they believe, can help districts face up to decisions that must be made in every area. Arguing this point, they write:

> Most districts do not organize and collect cost information in ways that give district officials and board members a sense of the trade-offs among different instructional programs or between instruction and business (or other) operations...an objective of new budgetary procedures might be to expose hard choices--i.e. to reveal how much is being "sacrificed" in one area to meet needs or demands in another area. (p. 21-22)

A closed budgetary procedure helps district divisions "hide" controversial items, they assert, and provides no forum for discussion of priorities (see also Colton & Frelich, 1979). Under the closed system, they say, it is impossible for district personnel to know whether the district as a whole favors, for example, an elementary music program or a secondary drug project. An example will help clarify their point. Richard Bumpstead, studying how one town of 31,000 responded to retrenchment, said that "the public caught only a blurred glimpse of the effect of the cuts on English courses and other programs, because the figures were presented in a line-item format with costs lumped under summary rather than programmatic titles" (p. 725). It is to this kind of budgeting procedure that Berman and McLaughlin refer.

Berman and McLaughlin describe how one district overcame this problem:

> One district we have visited has successfully dealt with this counter-productive compartmentalization of the budget process by opening up deliberation on priorities and needs to a system-wide participatory structure and the decision on district allocation to all members of the superintendent's cabinet. It appears that this open process has finally led central office administrators to evaluate the needs of their institutional unit in terms of educational needs and objectives of the district as a whole. (p.23)."

One of the most comprehensive plans for strengthening educational programs is advanced by Dr. Jerry Bellon of the University of Tennessee in "Strengthening the Educational Program in a Period of Decline" (1977). The recommended plan, which Bellon says has been used with large and small districts throughout the U.S., includes six sequential activities to improve programs during the retrenchment period.

1. Conducting a thorough assessment of the existing program.

   The district assessment, basis of the entire plan, begins with describing every program's goal, activities, and level of operation--that is, whether it is in planning stage, operational, or being phased out. Allocations of money, personnel, facilities, and time are also described. Using data generated by district tests, student achievement of objectives for each program are also analyzed.

2. Conducting a needs assessment of the school and community.

   The lay community, students, and educators are surveyed to determine their educational expectations and their perceptions of the school's effectiveness. In a large school district, a stratified random sampling has been successfully conducted, Bellon notes. The gaps between expectations and effectiveness may be considered educational needs and are reviewed in terms of the data generated during the assessment phase.

If the data supports the perceptions of those surveyed, there is basis for needs statements. These are converted into goals statements, which in turn generates the more specific, measurable objectives.

3. Determine which educational goals have the higher priority.

   After goals have been generated, they are prioritized. Once again, the communty, including students, are involved in the process, and priorities set by the Board reflect positions of all sub-groups. As

scarcity continues, the highest goals will receive the support needed to develop high quality programs; some goals may have to be further developed or eliminated.

4. Conduct an organizational study of the school district.

This step is often overlooked, Bellon notes, but it is important, for such a study can reveal weaknesses that need to be shored up. For example, a study might reveal lack of clarity about position authority and responsibility; positions may have to be redefined to be aligned with operations. Bellon notes further: "Sound management of a school district is dependent upon clarity of organizational responsibility, authority, and expectations. When this clarity has been accomplished, unity of purpose can be achieved. When there is unity of purpose it is much easier to focus on and allocate recources to the high priority goals."

5. Conduct a district-wide appraisal.

After priorities have been set, an appraisal of the district personnel is conducted to assure that all efforts are indeed focused on the priority goals. The appraisal begins with management and includes management goals and objectives tied to district goals; major activities to carry out goals; resources needed; a monitoring procedure; and criteria for establishing goal achievement. Bellon explains this aspect of the mangement plan further:

The management goals may include both short-term and long-range expectations. It is important that the goals are stated as intents or ends, and not as activities or means. It is extremely difficult to develop evaluation criteria for activities. The major activities to achieve the ends do need to be delineated and related directly to the goals.

Resources needed to attend to the goals include fiscal, physical, and human resources. Finances needed to successfully meet management expectations are usually relatively easy to determine. This is also true of the physical resources needed. The most difficult area is the allocation of human resources. This is usually the costlier area as well. The process of identifying necessary human resources is one phase of determining staff development needs. The skills and understandings necessary to conduct activities to attend to goals may have to be developed or further refined.

The monitoring process may be the most important activity in the management plan. It is essential for the administrator to meet with his surpervisor on a regular basis to discuss progress toward the goals. These meetings may result in adjustments in the appraisal program. Resources may turn out to be inadequate, or the expectations may be unreasonable. It is recommended that face-to-face discussions about the appraisal plan be held at least every three months.

When the management appraisal plan is first developed by each administrator, the criteria for success should be established. These are the criteria that are deemed acceptable by both the superior and subordinate and/ which determine how well the management goals have been achieved.

The development of the teacher appraisal program should begin after the management program has been in operation long enough to have any adjustments made which will help to insure the success of both programs. The administrators need to feel comfortable with their appraisal program so that they can give the leadership necessary for the development of the teacher appraisal activities. The key features of the teacher program are the same as those in the management program. (pp. 15-16)

6. Formulate continuous staff development plan.

Just as the appraisal program is implemented from the top down, so staff development programs should begin with those in

leadership positions. The staff development itself focuses on leadership renewal activities for those in key positions. "It will take positive proactive personnel programs to meet the challenges of decline," Bellon notes.

The responses of two network members to the survey questions on program quality ("What means are you taking for ensuring program quality in the year of retrenchment?") indicate that districts and states in the UEP area are working from theoretic bases similar to the ones advocated by Bellon. Nashville, for example, answers: "There can be no simple solution to such complex questions. Assessment of needs all the way up and down the organization is necessary...mandated and basic programs get priority. Some things go begging. We must rely on leadership to maintain quality of programs. Staff development has been a big plus for us...work closely with teachers and professional organizations... pull together, avoid adversary relationships...use public-parent and citizen group volunteers" (Cutback Management Survey I, 1981).

The Missouri State Department of Education representative suggests these strategies for ensuring program quality: "retraining staff individuals; reassigning job responsibilities to qualified staff; hiring multi-talented staff persons; and reassessment of eligible participating school districts...provide funds based on educational needs" (Ibid).

In contrast to Bellon's theoretic approach to addressing problems of maintaining program quality, Gay, Dembowski, and McLennan (1981) have

developed some practical measures districts may take vis-a-vis programs as they prepare for the future. These researchers believe that districts must explore alternate routes like programmed self-instruction packages for retaining the valuable courses being dropped. In addition, they say:

> Schools need to take advantage of advances in educational technology as a means of serving students' needs for curricular options despite declining enrollments. Although some subjects may have insufficient enrollments to justify assigning staff to teach them, they need not be dropped from the curriculum. Rather, schools might use televised teaching as an alternative. A teacher in another school within the same district, another district, another state, or even in an agency outside education can be videotaped as he or she teaches a class. These videotapes can then be used by schools with small enrollments as a relatively inexpensive substitute for a certified teacher. Such tapes can also facilitate individualized instruction, increase interdistrict cooperation, and be easily stored and used repeatedly. This alternative illustrates the principle that in times of declining enrollment imagination and innovation must often replace dollars as the means to curricular diversity. (p.656)

In the Urban Education Program area, Des Moines is acting out a variation of the strategy these researchers recommend. The district is now investigating the possibility of bringing together the few students from each school that want to take specific courses so that they may do so in a central area (Hyde, 1981). Still another option is to charge fees for special programs--usually extracurricular ones, such as sports or driver education--$25 to play on the football team, $15 for photography, $10 for metal-shop courses, in one instance (Robbins, 1981). In Michigan and Iowa, however, the state attorney generals have recently ruled that districts cannot charge fees for student participation in extracurricular activities. Parents and others may form clubs in Michigan to raise money to help finance interscholastic programs, however (Education Commision of the States, Legislative Review, 1981).

Districts and states will have to check court rulings on this issue before acting.

Another suggestion Gay, Dembowski, and McLennan make is that districts restructure courses slightly so that they include areas being dropped. Thus Aesthetic Expression might include composition drama, music, art, poetry and literature; American Studies might integrate poetry and art into a study of the literature and history. "Plans must be made for both the vertical and horizontal diversification of educational programs," they write. "Many existing instructional programs will have to undergo substantial reorganization; new programs will need to be expanded upward and downward to serve new clientele in both adult educational and early childhood education. . . whereas educators have typically tended to react to problems, they must now begin to anticipate the effects of declining enrollments" (p. 657).

Earlier research by Dembowski, Gay, and Owings (1979) indicated that special education and vocational education would continue to be emphasized in most school districts. In light of that finding, Gay, Dembowski, and McLennan suggest that both preservice and inservice activities should be developed to meet these needs. Specifically, they suggest that students enrolled in teacher education programs be counselled to specialized in those areas where there is the need, and should be encouraged to be certified in more than one area. Inservice courses should be geared toward training professional staff in these areas, too, the researchers say. (See also State of Illinois, 1975.)

On a more positive note, the Urban Education Studies, directed by Francis S. Chase, studied promising programs and developments in large school systems throughout the United States (1980) from 1977-1980. Chase identified five developments that seemed to hold promise for revitalization of urban education in the period of decline. Among these were (1) a concern for needs not well served by traditional schooling; (2) a significant increase in the number of community agencies and others collaborating with schools to enrich the learning environment; (3) numerous innovative programs and alternatives; (4) improved concepts and technologies of planning, management, and evaluation; (5) the initiation of better planned and more extensive programs for the inserving of teachers and administrators.

Chase concluded, however, that local factors are crucial to program success. "Among the factors identified as of great importance were program leadership, strong commitment on the part of the program staff and school principals, and the effectiveness of program implementation" (p. 34). He also found that "The amount of commitment from the community to the program seemed to reflect the amount of local planning and initiative that preceded the seeking of external funds. Continuous program evaluation was also deemed essential to continuing staff development and adaptation to student needs" (Ibid). Finally, the report notes, "It was also observed that most of the highly successful and promising programs represented significant departures from traditional schooling, especially through emphasis on student choice and responsibility, experience-based education, a greater use of resources outside the school." (Ibid.)

It seems clear that researchers and writers on the topic of program quality are less negative on the subject than are the practitioners, some of whom seem overwhelmed by dwindling numbers and shrinking resources (see Bumstead, 1981; Duke et al., 1981). Those taking the longer view believe that the retrenchment era may be used to the district's positive advantage--though none think it will be easy.

Staff

As noted earlier, researchers and practitioners alike acknowledge that the most difficult problems managers and administrators face in the era of decline is managing staff, and especially reducing it. This is particularly true, we recall, for districts that use "top-down" style management--a category into which urban districts allegedly fall (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Iannacone, 1979; Keough, 1978). If management of staff is to succeed in the era of reductions, the literature strongly suggests that staff must participate in the planning process (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977; State of Illinois, 1975; NSPRA, 1976). According to the NSPRA, their respondents were "overwhelmingly positive" about involving the instructional staff in the school-closing process. Frequently, what is called for in the literature is a turn-around in district thinking, a viewpoint that sees the value in staff and community input and seeks it out. This also requires the development of structures that facilitate that input, writers say. One such useful structure is the council/conference, discussed by Berman and McLaughlin:

> One of the most effective arrangements we have seen is a council/ conference structure that cuts across the district's divisional lines of authority and consists of regular and frequent working meetings of staff and community. Representatives of teachers, administrators, and parents meet in their separate conference groups. These groups also send delegates to the district Instructional Council, the district's official policymaking body which is designed to provide a forum where all of these interests can be heard. Such participatory structures can function not only to secure broad-based input, but can also serve to promote "cross pollination" between groups and special interests in the district. As a result, participatory structures can enable a district to move from a management style characterized by "conflict avoidance" to one that serves the longer-term interests of "consensus building." (pp. 17-18)

Another structure mentioned frequently is the task force, often drawn when school closing is immanent. (The council/conference described above may operate in any set of circumstances.) Such a task force can be charged with data collecting relative to enrollment and with helping to prepare plans and policies for closings, consolidations, and reductions (NSPRA, 1976). Several districts responding to the NSPRA survey involved teachers though the local teachers' association.

One of the most beneficial effects of including staff in planning is the gain in confidence and morale which the staff experiences. "Morale problems do exist when insecurity is felt as a result of impending layoffs," the Nebraska State Representative to the Urban Education Program observes. "The single best approach to alleviating such insecurity is constant and open planning to meet needs." The Wisconsin State Representative concurs with that view: "Most employees would rather know the facts as soon as they can be shared so personal action can be planned, and realities faced up to" (Cutback Management Survey I, 1981).

The literature frequently suggests that large urban districts have difficulty planning for the future, especially in the era of constraint. They "grew like Topsy" in the '60s--that is, without foresight--and the fear is that they will deal with constraint in the same haphazard fashion (Keough; Berman & McLaughlin). Edgar Kelley in his publication, Reduction in Force: Policies, Practices, and Implications for Education (1978), discussed by Tom Stefonek (1979), lists several questions to help districts plan for RIF:

> 1. Has the school district adopted a set of priorities for educational operations which identifies mandated, essential, important, and auxiliary services? Does the plan include identification or reduction in services which will be necessary to meet legal or fiscal constraints?
>
> 2. Does the district have an inventory of the skills, training, certification, and interests of its employees? Has this inventory been used as the basis for a long-range staffing plan which considers subplans for recruitment and selection of staff, supervision of staff, planned in-service, and plans for replacement needs?
>
> 3. Has the district projected its facilities needs, including plans for maintenance or replacement of facilities? Has it planned its budget needs so that both fixed costs and replacement or maintenance costs are budgeted for stability in budget and taxing needs? Has it examined possibilities for shared use of facilities with other government agencies?
>
> 4. Has the district developed a long-range plan which considers the population of the district and the projected needs of the district vis-a-vis facilities and programs?
>
> 5. Is the public involved in setting priorities? Is citizen input given highest consideration in determination of planning decisions?
>
> 6. Do plans exist for evaluation of the impact of reducations in program, services, staff? Have the questions of interest to such evaluations been identified?
>
> In addition to these questions, many more could be generated. Two of greatest importance might be: Have alternatives been considered for each decision? Have decisions been based on seeking to provide the best possible eduction for the students being served? (pp. 83-84)

The Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments (State of Illinois, 1975) has suggested that districts, with state help, consider these issues in order to get effective planning underway:

1. In making reduction-in-force decisions, to what extent should seniority in districts be the overriding factor, or should other criteria be put into a mix of considerations--teaching ability based on performance ratings; degrees; credits in addition to degrees; certification; years of experience in teaching, in a grade level or in a subject. In other words, what standards are to be used in determining reductions in force? Because of the time and cost and the increasing resort to the courts associated with efforts to dismiss a tenured teacher, the Task Force recommends that some vehicle be developed for due process training for superintendent, board members and teachers. The associations representing those groups should consider conducting such training.

2. How does the number of tenured teachers within the district compare to the long-term staffing needs?

3. Should contracts for non-tenured teachers for one year and one-half year periods be considered?

4. Should there be a study on policies on leaves, and a consideration of the advisability of continuing leaves or having a moratorium on leaves?

5. What should be considered with regard to reductions in the administrative ranks? The Task Force recommends a state-sponsored administrative staffing study as a service to boards, superintendents and teacher groups in a time of declining enrollments. This study could provide criteria to determine whether the administrative staff is off balance or not, and to recommend administrative staffing patterns based on district and attendance area enrollment and other factors.

6. Should the district hire more generally trained teachers, that is, those who can teach in several fields or levels?

7. Should the district consider the voluntary transfer of teachers from one field to another where the need for teachers is greater? What are the policies on paying for the retraining of teachers?

8. What processes and practices should the district adopt regarding transferring teachers from a building to be closed or only partially used to other school buildings?

9. What practices should the district follow in keeping the community and staff informed and involved in any planning for reductions in force? What practices should the district follow regarding the involvement of the staff in determining standards to be used in any reductions in force? What is the process of involving staff members and community groups in the anlaysis of the best available data? (pp. 55-56)

How reductions are enforced--that is, the method used--is a matter of concern to all parties, including school administrators, teachers, and the community. In school systems like Minneapolis, Wichita, or Milwaukee, attrition has taken care of the need to terminate, UEP representatives have said. In other cases, like Indianapolis and Des Moines, teachers have been laid off according to a pre-determined system.

Whether the system for reducing staff should be seniority continues as a critical issue, and research has been undertaken to determine what, if any, are its benefits or disadvantages as a retention measure. Richard Murnane, of the Department of Economics and the Institution for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University, in his analysis of work-to-date, (1980) concludes that fallible though seniority is, it is still the most practical and best method in the circumstances. There are two alternatives, he notes. One is to base a decision on supervisory evaluation. However, the costs of monitoring are high and may disrupt student-teacher interactions. More to the point, he suggests that since research has not defined the relationship between teaching techniques and student learning, the evaluation is really moot. The second alternative is to base security on the measurement of student learning, an approach Murnane rejects because it invites teachers to jockey for the best students and to allocate more time to students who do well on tests, he believes.

In sum, he concludes, "Given the equal access mandate, the technical characteristics of the education process, and the lack of options available to low-income parents, contracts that base the job compensation of teachers and security on seniority may promote the goals of public education more effectively than performance based contracts" (p. 31). Murnane also points out that the effects of seniority are determined by the expertise of the agents who interpret and administer the rules. As district and union leaders become more expert in negotiations, some of the ill effects can be mitigated, and greater flexibility in allocating teacher resources can be introduced.

Albert Shanker (1981), president of the United Federation of Teachers, asked outstanding teachers if they would like a reward system based on factors other than seniority and found they did not. According to Shanker's survey, teachers would prefer not to work under a system where success depended on factors beyond their control, such as the mix in the class. They also believed that system would inhibit their teamwork and "creative responses to the needs of individual children," and would reduce their job satisfaction.

Termination through cause or performance-based layoffs is often mentioned in the literature, but it seems a process frought with danger for the district. On the one hand, some practitioners like Fowler (1980), former superintendent of the Salt Lake City Schools, advocate "aggressively" terminating through cause, using a "strong" evaluation, clearly stated. On the other hand, the NSPRA reports that districts in its survey recommend against using RIF to weed

out incompetence. "If a school district took no action on an incompetent teacher in the first years of employment, it has no right to protection," NPRA reports. "Trying to get rid of poor performers during a reduction in force simply does not work "(p. 31).

Susan Moore Johnson of Harvard conducted a study of performance-based layoffs as carried out in four school districts in Massachusetts. In her report (1980), she notes the arguments against seniority--that it is an industrial practice that will not fit education, that experience is not synonymous with competence, and that it does not guarantee that schools will retain their best teachers. She confesses that she began her study sharing those beliefs. Further, she assumed that a layoff policy based on performance would "stimulate healthy competition among teachers and would yield a staff superior to one determined by the cutoff line on a seniority list" (p. 216). After interviewing central office administrators, school principals, evaluation committee heads, teacher association officers and reviewing the evalutation instruments, minutes of evaluation meetings, and central office memoranda, she was forced to reach a conclusion different from the one she had anticipated:

> While the findings of this study demonstrate that performance-based layoffs are indeed possible, they also illustrate that the existence of such policies does not guarantee automatic implementation. Local institutional factors including school committee and administrative leadership, community attitudes, and past practices in staff evaluation seem to determine whether the policies are successfully instituted. Furthermore, the interviews with principals indicate that such practices cannot be implemented without a price. From the principal's perspective, performance-based layoff practices have unintended consequences at the school site. The requirements for equitable procedures throughout the district compromise the autonomy of the local school; alter the role of the principal as

> protector, provider, and instructional leader; jeopardize the cooperative and collegial relations among staff; and diminish the effectiveness of teacher supervision. These unintended consequences of performance-based layoff practises call into question their educational worth. (p. 216)

From what Johnson and Murnane say, one can conclude that in practise at least, performance-based layoffs are not desirable policy. In theory, however, it is attractive, and at the least it seems districts should try for some flexibility in contracts with staff so that they are not locked in to seniority.

Bishop (1979) is of this mind. He suggests that districts and states work with unions and teacher associations to eliminate rigid clauses in the contract (and, in return, offer employees unemployment insurance benefits). "In addition to changes in the law, clarity of regulations and legal assistance from the state departments of education would be helpful," he adds. "State legislatures must accept responsibility to enact laws granting districts fexibility to reduce and transfer staff when enrollment declines are inevitable" (p. 294).

An alternative approach mentioned frequently is the incentive for early retirement (Estes, 1977; Michigan, 1977; Murnane, 1980, State of Illinois, 1975). The state of Michigan, for example, has encouraged early retirement by allowing teachers with 30 years' experience to retire at age 55. The advantage of this technique is that it reduces staff at the most senior, most costly level. Some suggest making retirement plans even more generous so as to draw

greater numbers of early retirees, if indeed the district can foresee considerable savings (Fowler, 1980; Thomas, 1980).

Other effective practices that would forestall RIF are mentioned in the literature. They include the following:

- basing needs on mid-year enrollments;
- contacting neighboring districts with increasing enrollments to
- place unassigned personnel;
- retraining teachers, either for areas like special education, which are on the increase, or for primary schools, where numbers are rising in the '80s;
- using unassigned persons as full-time substitutes;
- encouraging leaves of absence (according to NIE, 40% of those on leave do not return);
- developing federal and state projects where personnel can be used.

If there is flexibility in the union contracts with personnel, a district may want to consider these suggestions of M. Donald Thomas, former superintendent of the Salt Lake City District, where declines have been severe:

- make exceptions for certain categories of teaching and/or give preferential treatment to minorities;
- limit seniority to employees areas of certification or to service withing a certain level;

- try to reduce force based on program needs of the district, trying to match those needs with qualified persons of the highest seniority
- reduce work force in the administrative areas as well.

Finally, it is commonly noted that staff development efforts may have to be intensified to introduce older, more senior staff to innovations. Fishlow's comment (1978) is typical:

> Even those districts which do not have to resort to layoffs will not be in a position to do much hiring in the 1980s. While no scheme will make up for the loss of youthful energy and enthusiasm, "teacher renewal" programs could help moderate any tendancy toward stagnation. For example, well-designed inservice training could help keep experienced teachers up-to-date on promising new teaching methods and developments in their academic fields. (p. 77)

For teachers who are released, Bishop's suggestions for district assistance are pertinent:

> /Encourage the7 use of a regional placement service or the use of local teacher organizations in cooperation with local districts for placement purposes.
>
> Reeducate veteran teachers who might otherwise lose their positions due to bumping and lack of qualifications for available teaching assignments. This might be done regionally.
>
> Study the possibility of a consortium of schools sharing excess staff--perhaps coordinated regionally--"rent or contract-out" a teacher on regional basis (pp. 294-295).

Berman and McLaughlin, whose thesis is that districts should use decline to improve their capacity to implement change, mention staff development

as a particularly promising way of dealing with reassignment. Instead of merely show-casing innovating techniques, staff development should become the tool for revitalizing the district in the period of retrenchment, they suggest. In The Art of Retooling Educational Staff Development in a Period of Retrenchment (1977), McLaughlin and Berman describe the "deficit model" of staff development used by districts in the past, and the "developmental model", which they claim is more successful. Some characteristics of the latter are a flexible format, individual and group learning, and concrete activities. Local materials development, advance planning, and principals' involvement are also important.

Looking to the future requires adroit planning on the part of school districts and state departments of education since they must prepare for some rise in enrollment toward the end of the '80s even in the face of current declines. To help with planning for the future, Michigan's Department of Education Task Force (1977) suggests that districts should gather information with the help of state departments, in these areas (see also State of Illinois, 1975):

- rules and statutes that affect hiring, reassignment and termination;
- enrollment trends by building;
- professional staff inventory relative to age;
- sex, race, tenure status, certification level, and endorsement areas;
- professional staff attrition rates;

- program needs;
- affirmative action needs.

Facilities/Closing Schools

The literature suggests that the first step administrators must take in responding to facility problems is to analyze the district needs relative to enrollments. (See Eisenberger & Keough, 1974; Sargeant and Handy, 1974; State of Illinois, 1975; Michigan Department of Education, 1977.) As Eisenberger and Keough note, careful cost-benefit analysis and building-by-building comparative studies should precede the selection of schools to close. Further, in the current era, these studies are a necessity no matter what the final disposition of the buildings may be.

An exemplary building analysis is being carried out by the Kansas City Public Schools (1979) to determine the condition of the district's property and to evaluate each building for the future. An outside consultant firm will carry out the following work:

1. Standard data will be collected in on-site inspections of each building.
2. Based on this data, each building will be classified on the basis of age, construction, size, etc.
3. Each building will be evaluated for maintenance, energy efficiency, code and other requirements.
4. Profiles of priority and recommended action will be developed.
5. Unit prices will be developed for architectural and mechanical components for each building type.

6. A summary report will be issued reporting the findings and recommendations regarding possible closings and consolidations of schools based on facility criteria, and a computerized summary of all of the factors involved will allow for updating and revision. (p. 8)

The fact that Kansas City will integrate the information into an overall plan for school improvement is what makes it so commendable. Thus, the second phase of the project will include these steps:

1. An analysis of the potential service use of the buildings based upon enrollment projections and /to/ include potential energy costs, capital, operating and transportation costs over the five-year period.

2. Based on these studies, a series of feasibility alternatives would be developed and presented to the Board. Such options would provide cost effectiveness options for renovation, school closing and new construction considerations.

3. Those schools which would be renovated following the acceptance by the Board of a long-range strategic plan would be restudied for precise construction and cost estimates. (p. 8)

Districts that wish to conduct their own analysis may find the form developed by the Omaha Public Schools helpful. Located in the Appendix to this report, the form allows a district to rank order buildings according to various factors, including operation and maintenance costs, cost of code compliance, adequacy of size, and other relevant factors.

Other factors, some sociolgocal in nature, must be taken into consideration as a district prepares its building analysis. Bishop (1970) points out that several districts have used the following "planning criteria," as they closed schools:

1. Facilty condition such as age, maintenance factors, playground and field space, and acreage.

2. Potential disposabilty of a school to be closed. There is nothing more traumatic to a neighborhood school community than an empty school which has been frequently vandalized.

3. Ethnic distribution or the racial balance policy of a district may be seriously jeopardized in a school consolidation plan.

4. Geographic location of a school within the community or school district, particularly in relation to future population patterns.

5. Physical and natural barriers in the community, that is, major highways, congested intersections, railroads, which may be serious impediments in moving students from home to school.

6. Student transportation necessitated by consolidation. The cost benefits of closing a small elementary school may be offset by the additional costs incurred through the potential need for additional student transportation.

7. Establishing new elementary attendance areas. The selection of a given consolidation plan could be based in part on the criterion that as few students as possible would be required to move to a new attendance area. (pp. 289-290)

The Madison (Wisconsin) Public Schools considered the following factors as they closed three elementary schools in 1979:

1. Neighborhood Factors, including a child proximity count (density of student population near each school); child proximity overlap (student population density of surrounding area); and percent of student overlap (closeness of other attendance area).

2. Building Factors, including school building area in square feet; school building capacity; building age; classrooms in use; classrooms not in use; area divided by enrollment, current year; area divided by capacity; area divided by enrollment, previous year; capacity divided by proximity; proximity divided by capacity; maintenance cost; and percent of classrooms for instruction.

3. Energy Factors, including fuel consumption (BTU); electricity consumption (KWH); building heat ($); electricity consumption($); fuel divided by area; electricity (KWH) divided by area; heat divided by area; electricity ($) divided by area; fuel (BTU) divided by capacity; fuel ($) divided by capacity;

total energy consumption; and total energy consumption divided by area.

4. Enrollment Factors, including enrollment, current year, enrollment, previous year; current enrollment divided by classrooms; enrollment difference; and enrollment ratio.

5. Minority Factors, including minority enrollment, current year; percent minority enrollment; and minority population to capacity.

6. Dollar Factors, including total expenditures; salaries, current year; and total expenditures divided by area.

Using detailed criteria based on these characteristics, a rank order list of over 30 elementary schools was developed during 1979 and used as the basis for the first round of school closings. (Stefonek, pp. 11-12)

Districts that must close schools can draw upon a growing body of literature. Bishop, (1979), Eisenberger (1977), Estes (1977), Fowler (1978, 1980), Sargeant and Handy (1974), Posilkin (1981), and Wholeben (1980) can be consulted, along with documents released by the various state departments, including Illinois (1975) and Michigan (1977), often referred to in these pages. Virtually all of these writers make the same point--that the district will be successful in its efforts only if it has formulated a plan for closing the schools, a procedure that can be followed to make sure that decisions are thoughtfully arrrived at and reflect the best interests of all concerned.

The Education Facilities Laboratory (EFL), a non-profit agency that studies school utilization, advises administrators to develop the following before setting out on the journey to closing the schools. This plan can be used in conjunction with the Bellon plan (see pp. 47) for strengthening programs.

- a set of agreed-upon educational goals with specific objectives;
- a factual base concerning enrollments, demographic characteris-

tics, defining the givens upon which a plan could be developed;

- an analysis of the factual data (pupils and space);
- a set of possible solutions, such as reorganization patterns;
- a choice among alternatives, or justification of the alternative selected; include time sequence and cost analysis. (Sargeant & Handy, 1974)

The Process. Based on their own experience, many practitioners have elaborated on the EFL plan. Wholeben, in his article, "How To Determine Which School To Close" (1980), outlines a series of activities that integrate the information gained from the EFL plan into a step-by-step process. Wholeben's plan is not unique by any means; it is typical of what the literature has to say on the topic. But it is better organized in its presentation than many. The basic elements of the Wholeben plan are as follows:

- understanding the problem
- formulating a plan for closing
- structuring the evaluation
- checking the results
- issuing a report

1. Understanding the problem. The first step in making intelligent decisions about the issues is attempting to understand the nature of the declining enrollment problem. For example, fewer pupils do not mean more money to spend; excess space is not necessarily a blessing. Basically, "understanding the problem " means realizing the complexity of the issue--understanding the relationship between

the whole picture and its individual parts. It also means understanding the human dynamics of the situation, Wholeben points out--understanding that personnel may be cut in half if a school closes, but teachers' anxiety over dismissal will often disarm a consolidation effort.

2. Formulating the plan. Wholeben notes the importance of formulating a plan to evaluate school sites for closure: "Developing a specific plan of attack forces the problem-solver to think through personal biases and gives the planner a chance to predict potential difficulties without actually experiencing them," he writes (p. 9). The planner, he believes, should be prepared for any contingency so as to forestall confusion and loss of the community's confidence. Formulating a plan should involve several segments of one community. Specifically, he suggests administrators follow this advice:

- Involve both school representatives and community residents; do not view such an undertaking as an isolated responsibility.
- Convene specific-function committees with short-term responsibilities, set definite time frames for results, and allow full visibility to the public.
- Utilize the media for information dissemination purposes; contact them first; view them as neutral advocates, not adversaries; appoint a public relations person to handle all media contacts and prepared releases.
- Set and meet all deadlines.
- Release copies of the master plan prior to the commencement of site evaluations; allow maximum scrutiny and critical review of proposed actions before making a commitment. (p. 9)

Finally, he says, "Remember that a valid and reliable plan must match both the perspective (what is needed) and the psychology (what is acceptable) of the entire school community" (Ibid.)

3. Structuring an evaluation. When a school is to be closed, all of the school sites must be evaluated. Such an evaluation, Wholeben believes, is to "define specific criteria with which to compare various agreed-upon site characteristics (enrollment, energy consumption, distance from neighboring schools, age of building, demographics of neighborhood, etc.)" (p.10).

Next, he suggests that districts "choose an evaluation strategy...measure each criteria. Be sure to keep track of data used, and all intermediate results gained." He urges the district to appoint one person to coordinate data-collection communication tasks, someone well-versed in the use of criteria in evaluation and knowledgeable about the particular strategies to be used in this instance.

Wholeben suggests that once criteria are established and publicly identified, little should be done to change them: "Beware of additional criteria references offered by individuals specifically to protect a particular school faction or to delay the study as a whole" (p.10).

4. Checking results. In this step, Wholeben includes checking all data for errors, executing the evaluation model, and targeting schools for closure, one at a time. After a school is targeted, the consequences of the shift have to be evaluated. He suggests the impact of each criterion variable on the new site should be determined. The process works in this way: Target a school, reassign students, rework criteria affected by new student enrollments, identify criterion impact on the new site, repeat. Keep track of each criterion as each school closes until the process is complete.

Throughout his article, Wholeben's approach to dealing with the public is even-handed and sensible. For example, while the districts carry out the evaluation, he says, the administrators should "prepare periodic progress updates . . . for the media. Do not issue current standings of particular schools or the actual data values. Such materal is the substance of the final report. Complete the entire operation first; issuing sensitive information to emotionally involved spectators serves only to heighten their anxiety unnecessarily."

5. Issuing a Report. According to Wholeben, this report should be biographical--that is, a record of the first four steps. Specifically, it should contain four main sections.

   I. Recommendations--state sites targeted, rationale for selection, and a brief summary of all positive effects.

II. Procedural review--develop a written summary of elements one through four in nontechnical language, survey all procedures used, impact of decisions, recommendations received over time (from committees, etc.), and definite time-line for implementing the recommendations of Section 1.

III Technical report--define, discuss, and examine all data-related procedures, evaluation methods, and step-wise simulation processes; include all details. The purpose of this section is to allow the committee activist to check all procedures, etc, for accuracy and to preclude any charges of "hidden" intentions.

IV. Appendices--append all interim committee reports, memoranda, data summary tables, etc, to ensure completeness of the final document. (p. 11)

Distribute the report to schools, city hall, libraries, Wholeben suggests, so as to make the most of opportunities to communicate with the public. He urges public hearings in the target school communities.

6. Execute the recommendations. There are four important points to remember during the execution phase, according to Wholeben:

   1. Continue to use the media--don't let rumors become the source of information;
   2. Prepare brief summaries that highlight positive benefits of closure;
   3. Give high visibility to transferees and their adjustments;
   4. Demonstrate how savings have improved.

7. Begin your follow-up study. To carry out this last step, districts should keep data updates. This will help them evaluate progress and determine the effects of closing schools on district goals.

Morris' model (1977) for closing schools is similar in substance to Wholeben's. Under "Procedures for Closure," he makes these points, not articulated by Wholeben.

- Make an assessment of the timelines concerning closure.
- Allow sufficient lead time complete effectively and efficiently all the necessary processes.
- Let the public know there will be no surprises or quick action to effect a closure.
- Seek preliminary involvement and support of the Board of Education.
- Follow the policy and procedures approved by the Board of Education.
- Give statistical data and related information to the Board and public simultaneously.
- Prepare and submit the superintendent's official recommendations to the Board of Education, but do not seek action until a subsequent meeting.
- Give community personnel an opportunity to appear before the Board of Education at a public meeting before the Board of Education.

During implementation, the administrator should:

- Distribute the furnishings, equipment, and supplies to other schools or the supply center through an orderly, equitable procedure.
- Retain appropriate school records in a safe despository.
- Disconnect or secure all mechanical and electrical services for the building.
- Secure the building and grounds to protect the school district from liability, theft, and vandalism if the property is to be retained.
- Effect the transfer of faculty, staff, and administration to other professional assignments.
- Realign the available support services in accordance with criteria used.

- Establish new attendance area boundaries to reassign pupils.
- Schedule the necessary orientation meetings to inform parents about new school assignments for their children.
- Notify appropriate governmental units that the school is officially discontinued as a regular attendance unit. (p. 21-22)

Fowler (1978) asserts that a major difficulty in the process is preserving the credibility of administrators and the Board itself in the decision-making process. Frequently, he notes, the Board is accused of having a hidden agenda, of making the decision beforehand, or of ignoring the public. This corroborates Colton and Frelich's findings in the case of the St. Louis closings (1979). Fowler notes that the Salt Lake City School Board found the following practices helpful in forestalling such charges and in gaining a consensus. (See also NSBA, 1976; State of Illinois, 1975.)

1. Make all information public at the same time it is given to the Board of Education.
2. Hold only public meetings. Agree not to have executive sessions during a school closure process.
3. Send all reports to community decision-makers.
4. Establish tentative solutions and show modifications made because of public hearings.
5. Work closely with the media. Keep them informed at all times. Encourage the publication of what is happening and the reasons.
6. Keep parents and students informed. Mail out newsletters, invitations to public hearings, summary of tentative solutions, and modifications considered. (p. 6)

Fowler also notes the importance of placing the Board's decisions into operation as quickly as possible--possibly the day after decisions are made.

Bishop (1979) encourages the use of outside consultants to add authenticity and credibility to data in the case of school closings. "Often parents do not want to believe the enrollment projections," he writes, "or will claim that the administration has erred, or contrived the data to cut costs. An outside team can always claim total objectivity and disinterest as to the impact of the findings of the study in terms of the consequences within the district" (p. 291).

Responses from the Urban Education Program Network members corroborate findings from literature in several reports, from the importance of involving the public in the decision-making process to cultivating an attitude of consistency and tough mindedness (Cutback Management Survey I, 1981). The representative from the Missouri Department of Education, for example, suggests that districts follow these suggestions:

1. Prior to closing any facility, the Board should establish equitable guidelines, rules, and regulations.
2. Involve the public when possible.
3. Keep the public informed of class sizes, staff reductions, declining area population, etc.
4. Give adequate notice to the public.
5. Be consistent.
6. Be open-minded to suggestions from the public.
7. Present options to all involved.
8. Consider alternatives to closing a facility, such as lease arrangements, converting buildings to warehouse/storage facilities.

9. If the building is an extremely aged facility, perhaps it might be better to demolish the building.

Missouri offered two precautions: "Avoid reacting to pressure from special interest groups; and avoid stating consequences (threats) that cannot be carried out." The representative from Chicago notes that a hearing must be held on each school to be closed, along with "cogent reasons pro and con prepared by staff; and a firm stand taken by Board members on the basis of other facts as well as monetary facts."

Perhaps it is well, on the whole, to keep in mind that, as Bishop has said, "School closings [are] multiple-agency problems." That is, the public schools alone can not and should not bear the responsibilities for the changes that must occur as we adjust to new constraints. He notes further:

> "Whether schools are used for new and socially constructive purposes or left vacant, the problems have to be seen as the responsibility of many community agencies, not those of the school's alone. Concern is often expressed that if we create new community schools or senior citizen centers, schools will again be viewed as the sole agency able to successfully address all social problems. As integration efforts have recently shown, schools simply do not have the leverage to solve all community social problems and should not be asked to undertake such jobs alone. (Bishop, p. 292)

In the final analysis, then, research seems to be with those who advocate involving the community as fully as possible in finding solutions to the "excess space - deficient funding" dilemma. Working together on the problem helps all parties to see themselves as partners, research note; districts are the managers -- there is no mistake about that. But managers can only succeed in the long view if they have taken the community wishes into consideration.

For urban districts, that seems a particularly important challenge in the days ahead.

Disposition of the building. The final disposition of the buildings themselves remains a problem that each school district must face alone insofar as it must be tailored to the district's future needs and take into consideration state legal regulations. Most districts prefer to use surplus space first for extra education programs--in other words, not to close buildings at all (NSPRA, 1976). If this possible, a district may want to consider a list developed by Morris (1977), which is typical of what the literature suggests. He says a district should explore using the extra space to house:

- alternative school
- preschool center
- adult education center
- reading clinic
- joint university public school educational center
- teacher inservice educational center

The Illinois Task Force, on the same topic, asserts that regular school programs should receive first priority, and suggests these improvements.

1. Reinstatement of programs previously discontinued or reduced such as art, music or physical education.
2. Elimination of unsatisfactory learning evironments, such as an auditorium used as a full time classroom.
3. Enriching the curriculum by providing space to create learning resource centers, large group instruction areas, audio-visual centers, interest areas, learning laboratories areas, and in-school museums.

4. Additional opportunity to implement a regular school program based on optimum time periods for learning rather than maxium use of space, i.e., flexible scheduling, modular scheduling, block scheduling.

5. Providing areas for students' unscheduled time such as student lounges or centers.

6. Elimination of undesirable practices caused by overcrowding such as double shift, extended day scheduling, teachers without a "home base" room.

7. Provisions for adequate office space and meeting rooms for faculty, support staff and volunteer aides.

8. Increased available space will allow for smaller class size which could provide more opportunties to individualized instruction (p. 61).

If it becomes necessary to dispose of the building--that is, if costs of maintaining it are prohibitive in light of other cutbacks in the district, the administration and Board must consider whether to lease or sell the facility. Allen Green, director of Educational Facilities Laboratory, and others who advise districts, are counselling them to go slowly on the matter of sale and to hold on to the property if it is at all possible, in light of projected enrollments (John Herbers, 1981). However, Green has acknowledged that retention of property is often difficult for the urban district to manage in the face of pressure for lower taxes.

Writers point out that buildings can be used to broaden community cultural opportunities if leased for the use as museum space, public library, or historic society. They also point out that buildings can be shared with

neighboring districts on a rental, lease tuition acceptance, or contract basis (Bishop, 1979; Hechinger, 1981; NSBA, 1977, Posilkin, 1981). The advantage of sharing with the community is that coalitions are built with the citizens. Hechinger points out that in some instances, men and women who attend senior citizen centers in schools have at the same time become valuable teaching volunteers.

Robert Posilkin, coordinator of joint occupancy in the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools, discusses leasing in his article in the American School Board Journal (1981). This district has 60 tenants in 182 district buildings. The tenants include day care centers, centers for students with special learning needs, and the country government itself. The district has thus realized a profit of $350 thousand dollars in 1981. In his article, Posilkin describes the major concerns of a joint occupancy policy and tenant priorities, and the lease document itself. He describes two benefits of the leasing policy: "First, it forces the school system to scrutinize its space requirements on an annual basis. This not only turns up potentially beneficial surpluses, it also guarantees that our use of space is justifiable in all cases. Second, students have a new opportunity to interact and benefit from joint occupancy tenants" (p. 26).

Green and others note that the danger of an empty school in the large city is that it falls prey to vandals, which not only means a loss of property value, but the destruction of the school neighborhood. In such

cases, the district may well want to sell the building in order to have it occupied as quickly as possible. The National School Board Association has developed the following series of questions that a district should ask itself, based on NSBA's belief that the proposed use should improve or strengthen public education in the city.

- Can income from the sale be earmarked for the maintenance or remodeling of remaining buildings?
- To what use will the sold building be placed?
- How compatible with public education will the new use be?

The NSBA cautions in particular against leasing buildings for use that will "downgrade the neighborhood and drive people out of the area." They note that federal law prohibits the knowing sale, lease, or donation of property to organizations that discriminate on the basis of race or sex. "In any case," they say, "the Board will want to consider whose money they are taking and if they want to assist such groups even if the money will help public education" (pp. 19-20). State regulations and special laws like those concerning sale during desegregation processes have to be kept in mind, too. In fact, most authorities recommend consulting a lawyer before leasing or selling begins.

Perhaps no bidders will be found for the empty buildings. If no buyers come forward, districts may consider the following for help in locating buyers: local and regional real estate agents advertising in local media

and trade journals; the Chamber of Commerce; the districts' citizen committees; county and local government agencies; other corporations, like utilities, with contacts in a buyers' market. Finally, the State Department itself may want to lease or buy the building, since one of its divisions may be responsibile for finding space for all state agencies (State of Illinois, 1975).

Dealing With the Community

We have noted the importance of involving the community, including teachers, in the decision-making process. As Eisenberger (1977) says:

> Ultimately, enrollment decline is a people problem. And to meet people problems, there must be involvement. . . .True community involvement is time consuming, laborious, and saps every ounce of strength from a leader. There have been superintendents who have gone it alone--without the community involvement--making sound educational decisions. But, somehow in the process, they run the risk of losing the parents, losing the teachers, losing the community, and losing the board. And at the end of this list there may be a new superintendent who comes in riding high on the educationally sound but politically disastrous decisions of the fired person. (pp. 36-37)

The literature agrees that community, staff, and administrative and school boards must see the problem of retrenchment as <u>theirs</u>; they must try to solve it together--only then can real support for change be brought about, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) say.

But various structures can be used to involve the community. Some districts have used polls or surveys to discern community opinion on various issues

(Bishop, 1979; Eisenberger, 1977). But Eisenberger, for one, suggests that questions be phrased carefully. "Do not ask the community if they want to close a school, for example," she cautions. Rather, "Ask them what alternative building use they would favor--a community recreation facility? A preschool program? A senior citizen center?" (p. 37).

Another strategy she favors is the small-group coffee hour, where the school leader meets with small groups of interested community members to discuss problems and alternative solutions. Eisenberger explains what must be done: "You need to convince Mrs. Jones, PTA leader, that her influence, acceptance, and reputation will not be lost, simply transferred to a new school setting. Toward this end, shift the PTA emphasis to the district-wide council and begin planning activities district-wide, instead of at the building level" (p. 37). (See also Bishop, 1979.)

The third strategy she advocates is the citizen task force--the "specific function committee" mentioned by Wholeben as crucial to formulating the plan for closure. This group serves as the link between school board, administration, and community, bringing together members of various community groups who can review data and gather information on their own. Besides the concrete help the task force provided, the NSPRA notes that it "can take a great deal of the heat off both the board and the administration. It can provide a rational approach to a highly emotional problem," (p. 41). According to Eisenberger, the key to the successful task force is administrators' making good decisions about certain factors relative to it.

The first important factor is the type of task force, which may vary depending on needs of the district and the length of time available for carrying out the duties. She identifies three types, which the NSPRA (1976) also describes:

- The Indepth Seminar, which might extend over two weekends. Most the data gathering should have been completed before meetings begin for this type to function best. School experts in pertinent areas of finance, transportation, facilities, and curriculum should be on hand throughout as resources, and the group can divide itself to study each of these areas. The NSPRA says an advantage is that consensus is likely from such an intensive effort; a disadvantage is that haste may allow valuable information to be overlooked. This kind of task force may need experts in group dynamics to be on hand to facilitate the process, Eisenberger notes. But it is likely to produce strong conclusions and firm recommendations.

- The Study Group, which meets over a period of six to eight weeks, once or twice a week. Its work is similar to the in-depth seminar, but is is less concentrated in effort. A high degree of structure, preplanning, and input from resource persons are also necessry for it to function.

- The Extended Study Committee, meeting once or twice per month for nine to twelve months. This committee does the actual data gathering. The NSPRA says that its major advantage is in the

comprehensiveness of the study that generally results, whereas its drawback is that friction may develop as time goes on.

The second important factor, Eisenberger notes, is the leadership and composition of the task force. An outside consultant, central administrator, or someone selected from the group may function as the leader. The NSPRA backs this up, adding advantages and disadvantages of each type of leader:

- An outside consultant will have expertise both in dealing with declining enrollment and in group dynamics, and will be perceived as unbiased, but may not have sufficient credibility with the community and the task force members.
- A central office administrator will have approximately the same advantages and disadvantages as the consultant but may be looked upon as pushing the superintendent's views.
- A leader appointed by the board from the task force membership may have none of the necessary skills and may also invite charges of manipulation by the board.
- A leader elected by the membership will have credibility and popularity but may lack expertise in developing consensus. (pp. 42-43)

There is no disagreement that the group should be as broadly based as possible. The broadest representation of community, teacher, PTA, religious, civic, political, and business leaders should be included. Other writers on the topic such as Sieradsky, Thomas, Bishop, and Fowler agree.

The fourth important factor is selection of members. Members can be selected by the Board or they can volunteer, once invitations have been sent out by letter to all of the groups to be represented.

The fifth and final factor is the charge to the group. The charge may be broad--"to study the problem and make recommendations"--or narrow and specific--"to recommend one school consolidation plan"--but it should be as specific as possible, both as to the scope of work and the final date on which the task force is to report. The task force should also be given enough information to work with, or access to that information. Without it, the group will go through minutes of old Board meetings, dredging up all sorts of issues, Eisenberger (1977) warns. The actual charge may involve collecting data on enrollment, building capacity, and maintenance costs. (See also Morris, 1977; Fowler, 1978.)

There are several opinions about who should receive the task force's final report, according to practitioners. One option is to report to the Board, with a copy going to the superintendent, who will then make final recommendations. Another alternative is to have the task force report to the superintendent only, who then submits the report to the Board, along with recommendations. A third option is that the task force report to the Board only. Later, after hearings, the superintendent may offer recommendations, a procedure that will allow the superintendent to assess community reaction before becoming involved (Eisenberger, 1977; NSPRA, 1976).

An exemplary model for involving the community via the task force is provided by the Omaha Public Schools. A Report on School Consolidation of the Omaha Public Schools described the formation of the task force in the following way:

The Superintendent of Schools put into motion the formation of Citizens' Task Force on School Consolidations during the summer of 1980. Letters were sent to community organizations and advisory committees to solicit representation. Local newspapers carried articles asking citizens residing in the district to contact his office for possible task force membership. School district teachers and administrative staff were also represented on the committee. As a result of this endeavor, a 38 member task force was formed.

The Superintendent charged the Task Force with three objectives. The tasks completed were as follows:

1. Developed guidelines to be used in the consideration of building consolidations (system-wide).

2. Received and assessed citizen input regarding the overall plan for determining school consolidations.

3. Suggested changes in the Policies and Regulations, if deemed necessary as a result of the Task Force's efforts.

A nomination committee presented its recommendations for two co-chairpersons at a September 25 organizational meeting of the Task Force. The nominations of (Ms. X) and (Mr. Y) were approved by the Task Force and the challenge accepted by both individuals.

The Omaha task force separated into six-subgroups, each with a specific charge. Here is the list of those groups and their responsibilities, from the Omaha Report:

Sub-Groups	Responsibility
1. Projected Membership	To study past, present and projected membership trends of the Omaha Public Schools
2. Capacity & Conditions of School Buildings	To review the capacity and the condition of the school buildings
3. Per Pupil Costs and Program Offerings	To examine the effect of the size of a school's enrollment on per-pupil operational costs (also consider educational program offerings)

4.	City/County Land Use	To consider City/County land use plans
5.	Capital/Fiscal Resources	To study estimates and/or alternatives available in using capital & fiscal resources
6.	Review & Assessment of Other Cities	To review and assess other cities regarding school consolidations

But let us say the school is closed or been consolidated with another. What then? Surely it would be foolish to abandon efforts to strengthen communication with the public when these are so urgently needed to forestall isolation and negativism--those enemies of mobilization and support. A district may want to implement the following strategies at this point. Through developed by the NSBA (1976) with their perspective, these strategies can be implemented by LEAs, and they lend themselves to reaching long-term goals of support.

- Establish, as a standing committee to the Board, a long-range planning committee to address all aspects of long-range school district planning, including proposals for school board action, and to coordinate the district program in vivew of pupil enrollment projection and pupil/community needs;
- establish written procedures which expand on the Board's commitment to community involvement by defining the means for achieving maximum public input and participation in school district decision making;
- initiate an open forum with the community at large in concert with Board policy, e.g. through citizen advisory committees, public meetings, announcement of school board meeting, or other legitimate means which ensure an ongoing network of communication with all segments of the community;
- eliminate secrecy if it exists and do not neglect to communicate school-district information with the public;
- develop and implement a definite program to enhance communication with the press and other news media;

- develop a public relations effort which emphasizes aggressive "marketing" of school district programs and new opportunities, e.g. through brochures, and films to promote the community for attracting new residents and businesses into newly developed areas within the city. (NSBA, pp. 23-24)

One district making efforts in regard to improving its community relations is Kansas City. Developed by outside consultants, the plans they have mounted for improving their internal and external communications can serve as a model for any school district hoping to do the same. These are the steps they hope to take for improving internal communications:

1. Communications and media contact training for principals.
2. Developing a structure for a consistent communications program for administrators, staff and Board members.
3. Employee incentive programs.

External communication, the district hopes, will be improved as these steps are taken:

1. Involving business and civic leadership.
2. A speakers' bureau composed of District personnel and top students.
3. Pursuit of national and local news coverage.
4. Telephone information center.
5. Promotion of District radio and television programs.
6. Planned parent mailings.
7. Open house at the schools.
8. Developing initiatives with various levels of news media including editors, news directors, beat reporters and photographers.

Funds for the Kansas City Plan, incidentally, come from private sources channeled through the Council on Education, a non-profit local agency.

In mounting a program to improve communications with the public, perhaps the biggest challenge to administrators is to convince themselves that a change in policy is needed, and that old methods cannot work in the new era of constrained budgets that lie ahead. Whereas once silence may have been golden, that is no longer the case. As the public is asked to share more of the fiscal burden falling on schools, it appears they will also demand more of a share in the decision-making. As Bakalis (1981, I) has said:

> Parents and their children will also feel the impact of decline. Parents will face confusion and conflict in their attitudes toward the schools. They find declining enrollments and higher costs hard to understand and even harder to support. They want costs held in check or reduced while complaining that their children's education is being shortchanged when programs and teachers are cut. Parents present the greates challenge to school administrators, who must educate the public as to the meaning and options presented in an era of educational decline. (p. 12)

The research is clear that the best leaders will be those who can put community concerns to good use; most believe it is an absolute necessity if the era of retrenchment is to be weathered well.

III. THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

Assistance the states might give to local districts and a consideration of some state problems remain to be discussed in this paper. In Declining Enrollments: The Challenge of the Coming Decade (1978), the editors, Abramowitz and Rosenfeld, identify five policy areas that states could be or are now considering:

1. Reformulation of state aid policy to protect districts against sudden loss of state aid.
2. Improvement of forecasting methods to provide LEAs more lead time; the projection of enrollments in less aggregated fashion; the development of reliable data collection methods at the state level.
3. Help with planning, especially improving management that will help LEAs choose practices among budget and personnel alternatives; the improvement of the dissemination of information among school districts; the offering of seminars, training programs, and workshops on topics related to decline.
4. Provision of special services as budgets are cut; the development of alternative means for the delivery of services.
5. The development of more flexible staffing policies so that women and minorities are protected; encouraging such reforms as early retirement incentives, teacher-job-clearing houses, the retraining of teachers for skills in demand, and the subsidizing of advanced training for teachers.

3. Seek funds in order to make personnel available to help LEAs in preparing local forecasts and the subsequent planning.
4. Develop funding sources to be allocated to LEAs for help in program planning activities in such fields as health education, education of the exceptional child, and environmental education.
5. Establish training programs and disseminate information to help LEAs deal with program management.
6. Conduct a study to determine the feasibility and desirability of requiring teacher training institutions to submit a five-year plan describing how they intend to adjust to lessen the general oversupply of teachers.
7. Conduct a study to determine the feasibility and desirability of a five-year course of study as a requirement for teacher certification.
8. Sponsor a state-wide conference and/or regional study committee to study all the issues surrounding the retraining of teachers; study the feasibility of a job-finding clearinghouse, at the state level, for teachers.
9. Establish a resource center at the state level to maintain a computerized data bank on vacant classrooms.
10. Provide technical assistance for LEAs on matters of community relations, particularly with respect to community opposition to school closing.

School finance continues to be a crucial area of interest to both state and district-level educators. Much of the literature focuses on the need for states to revise their finance formulas so that finance equity may be

realized--it is this help that districts seem to want most (Bins & Townsel, 1978; Leppert & Routh, 1978; Wilken & Callahan, 1978). In their study School Finance Reform in the States: 1981, Allen Odden and John Augenblick outline fiscal reforms that occurred in the '70s and discuss changes in school financing that may occur in certain states in 1981, due to legislative actions. Among the states are two in the UEP region: Kansas, where a new formula has been recommended; and Missouri, where the School Finance Study Group's recommendations to do the following will be considered:--(1) increase the sales tax, receipts from which are to be used for distribution to local districts and for property-tax roll back; (2) adopt a district cost-of-education index; and (3) use a three year average pupil count for declining enrollment districts.

Four states where education expenditures are threatened by revenue problems are in the UEP region. These are Iowa, where state support for education has been reduced by 4.6 of percent; Kentucky, where a law enacted in 1976 has limited increases in tax revenues to 4 percent each year, thus making it difficult for districts to keep pace with inflation; Ohio, where aid has been reduced by 3.6 percent in 1981 and where low revenue estimates have forced the state to increase a series of state taxes in order to offset a projected deficit of almost 500 million dollars; Michigan, facing the most severe decline in state revenues of the 50 states, where state aid for education has been reduced by 11.4 percent. In Michigan special aid for districts with declining enrollment and all state support for capital outlay have been eliminated by reducing funding for all other categorical programs to 70 percent of the 1979-1980 level.

Odden and Augenblick note that 11 states are studying their school finance systems or are anticipating major studies--among them Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Indiana. Among UEP-region states, Illinois is likely not to see any major legislative activity in the area of school finance.

The authors next review major policy issues related to finance, including the impact of reforms, cost-of-education indices, state aid for special needs, capitalization, and education tax burdens. Finally, the authors note the fiscal issues that are likely to absorb attention in the future. These issues include the following questions related to retrenchment and declining enrollment in the urban schools:

1. Can other characteristics of school districts that contribute to their legitimate needs for funds, such as size, be included in state aid formulas?
2. How can states appropriately consider the fiscal impacts of declining enrollments in their state aid systems?
3 Can the relationship between education resources and education accomplishments be specified so that funds can be used more efficiently?
4. What would the likely impact of new finance mechanisms, such as tax grants or block grants, be on the provision of education services? (p. 45)

The authors believe that whereas the '70s recognized that school finance was a part of public finance, the overriding issue of the '80s will be the roles of the various levels of government in supporting education.

In this respect, it would seem that state and districts must work together on solving the retrenchment problems; the future must see the one less isolated from the other if educational goals are to be realized and the era of constraint is to become an era of improvement.

Urban Education Program Survey. In July, 1981, the state representatives to the Urban Education Program Network were polled for questions and issues they believe are important for consideration at the state level. The following questions/issues suggested by the Wisconsin state representative emerged as a result of the poll:

1. How have LEAs on a statewide basis informed of SEA service reductions?
2. How do middle management staff convince top management staff that service reductions must really occur and that some activities must be reduced or eliminated in spite of political pressures and expectations that everything will still be provided or accomplished?
3. How do SEA top management staff identify cutback areas (services, programs, staff positions)? How is lower/middle management involved in the process, if at all?
4. What SEA policies exist regarding exemption of women, minorities, and persons with special skills during the layoff process?
5. What type of internal reorganization has occured due to financial and staff reduction?
6. What amount of reduction (percent and actual numbers) is expected in funds and staff during the period July 1, 1981 - June 30, 1982, including both state and federal sources of funds and staff?

Four Network state representatives responded to the questions. Their answers are found on the pages that follow. They indicate that no policy across states has emerged on these issues, although attempts are being made to effect policy on the individual state level.

1. How have LEAs on a statewide basis been informed of SEA service reduction?

   -I'm not aware that LEAs have been provided a descriptive summary of the position, functions, and services reductions which have occurred. I believe this should be done when cutbacks occur and that periodic updates should be provided as appropriate. I believe we have eliminated over 30 staff positions during the past two months, including some which provided direct, on-site assistance to school districts. However, LEAs do not seem to have a complete understanding of these actions. They discover what has happened when they try to contact staff members they have worked with, only to learn they've been laid-off or tranferred. Individual programs share information with their LEA colleagues, but this information does not get to all districts or penetrate very deeply into some LEAs.

   -LEAs realize that services will be reduced but no notification has been given. Consultants cannot provide as many services; however the state personnel is working with intermediate education agencies, referred to as Area Education Agencies (AEA's) in our state, to coordinate activities. This will provide an avenue for giving LEA's maximum services with limited resources.

-A. State superintendent's newsletters to district superintendents and boards of education

B. Superintendents statewide meetings

C. Educational organizations agenda items

D. Newsletters

E. Personnel contacts

F. Individuals memos and letters to local district administrators and board members

G. Regional meetings

H. State-wide conferences

2. How do middle management staff convince top management staff that service reductions must really occur and that some activities must be reduced or eliminated in spite of political pressures and expectations that everything will still be provided or accomplished?

-A) Commit to writing the activities and services that will be reduced or eliminated; schedule a meeting and impress upon top management staff the effect that fewer employees and resources have upon services.

B) If an MBO-type process is used in the agency, revise the plan to document service and activity reductions that will occur.

C) Learn to say "no," as positively as possible, when top management continues to expect that all activities and services will still be present even though resources have been diminished. Don't pretend everything can be done as it was previously--point out that reductions in resources causes reductions in output. This is not easy to do if top managers don't recognize operational realities.

D) Document the effects of resource reductions over time; be prepared to show what wasn't done that might have been done.

-Top management realizes the need for cutbacks and has made decisions to reduce some activities without persuasion from midole management. An appropriate ratio of program and support funds must be maintained as compared to salary or staff funds in order for services to be provided to people and agencies.

-Our problems seems to flow in the reverse order. Except for special interest groups, the political pressure is for reduction and a non-categorical approach. Top management is more concerned with reduction than middle management.

--Through budget and reductions
--Department priorities (ranking)
--Needs assessment

3. How do SEA top management staff identify cutback areas (services, programs, staff positions)? How is lower/middle management involved in the process, if at all?

-The first draft of proposed position reductions was made by top management staff alone, based on priorities and perceptions held by the group. Middle management staff were then informed of these preliminary plans and were asked to respond to them, analyze the effects, and propose changes. Several changes occurred because of this feedback.

-To a significant degree, however, the process was from the top down rather than the result of joint planning and mutual discussion of priorities and alternatives.

-Top management has made decisions about staff position, services, and programs with input from lower and middle management. To date, long range cutbacks and staff adjustments have been implemented by funding source (loss of) in specific program areas and by natural attrition.

-A cabinet level task force has been formed to examine the organizational and service issues of the department. Lower/middle management will be involved on a need-to-know or informational basis. Services will flow from the mission statement document and mandated charges.

A. The State Board determines area priorities;
   -Each asst. commissioner offers suggestions based on assessment of his/her area.
B. -Input is given to sectional directors then sent up to the asst. commissioners.

NOTE: School districts are asked to assess their needs and submit their concerns to the SEA. This information assists in determining the budgetary reactions to follow.

4. What SEA policies exist regarding exemption of women, minorities, and persons with special skills during the layoff process?

-Special consideration is given to women, minority group members, and persons with special skills by exempting certain numbers or percentages of them from lay-off, according to contractual provisions or state personnel code provisions (whichever apply). This reduces the effect upon these employees but causes some resentment and legal challenges on the part of more senior staff members who are laid off or bumped into lower level classifications.

-Our Department of Public Instruction has an affirmative action plan, and it does address exempting protected classes if layoffs occur. Many of the reductions in staff have been handled through attrition. Several position vacancies were not filled or were filled by staff members from other units whose positions were eliminated. There are very few minority employees. Most of them were hired within the past eight years. Department procedures states that when staff is reduced seniority will not be the only factor. It is my judgment that this may be effective in retaining minorities.

-Reductions have occurred by attrition thus far. It is hoped this policy will suffice. An affirmative action policy will be a part of any adopted program of staff reduction. Maintenance of achieved gains is a high priority within the department structure.

-There are no special SEA policies; however, affirmative action guidelines and equal employment opportunity guidelines are followed. There are no disproportionate layoffs of any one groups.

5. What type of internal reorganization has occurred due to financial and staff reductions?

-Significant internal reorganization is pending, primarily due to a new agency administration. Some minor reorganization has occurred as the result of financial and staff reductions, e.g., the elimination of some work units through consolidation with others, but this has not been extensive to date.

-The Department was reorganized in 1979 to increase efficiency. Any changes due to financial and staff reductions will not drastically change the table of organization. We do anticipate reductions and consolidation of units within the Department.

-Underway presently. It is too early to define at this time. See answer #3.

-No major reorganization has occurred. However, some positions are not filled and the responsibility is shifted or shared.

6. What amount of reduction (percent and actual numbers) is expected in funds and staff during the period July 1, 1981 - June 30, 1982, including both state and federal sources of funds and staff?

-An 8% reduction in state provided dollars has already taken effect for the July 1981 - June 1982 budget year. The magnitude of the federal reduction has not been released yet but it appears to be substantially greater. It is expected another state level reduction of 4-6% could occur before June 30, 1982, if state revenue receipt projections continue to be pessimistic.

-The Department has reduced well over one hundred positions during the past two years and minor shifts will be made this year to adjust to supervisor/staff ratio. Until exact funding levels are known this year and unless further cuts are imposed, no major staff reductions are projected.

-This is still very unclear. The state has not adopted a permanent budget. We have been operating on an interim budget for the past four months and probably will continue the same for an uncertain period of time. Forty-four of 576 positions are not filled. Additional losses can not be projected with any certainty.

-Approximately 15-30%; (Actual member are not known at this time.)

SUMMARY

In this paper we have examined current statistics relative to declining enrollment--specifically noting the downturn in the early '70s, made all the more difficult to manage since the experience of the '50s and '60s had been one of enormous growth, when schools had multiplied, teachers increased, and new programs been inaugurated. Neither statisticians nor administrators had anticipated the swiftness and depth of the population decline; the Midwest and large cities are among the areas where the drop has been most severe. The outlook for the future is somewhat more sanguine. Statisticians look for an increased enrollment in primary grades in the early '80s, but this will run in the midst of a general decline in K-8 and 9-12 enrollments. Thus, there is a two-way dynamic--both growth and decline--for which administrators must be prepared in the '80s.

The effects of decline and subsequent retrenchment are generally felt in five areas: finance, program quality, staff response, facility management, and community relations, particularly with respect to closing schools. Some effects in each of the areas were examined closely, particularly the loss in state money that is tied to attendance, loss due to municipal overburden and to lowered tax revenue base as the younger, more affluent families leave the cities. The variety and number of programs changes with the advent of decline, it was seen, and class sizes increase. Counter-productive attitudes such as anxiety, doubt, and loss of confidence reportedly also set in as retrenchment advances. In large schools, there is some evidence, too, that a competition among staff for

the remaining resources, for smaller classes, and for the more able students ensues (p. 27). A crucial issue for districts and states is the advisability of reducing staff by seniority. That method, it was pointed out, can drain the district of the more innovative and better teachers, may disturb the minority balance of the staff, and can affect the program area as well. Excess buildings, excess rooms, and excess land purchased in the pre-decline era were viewed as the most difficult facility-related problems. Eventually, schools must be closed--a complicated, delicate process for which an overall plan must be conceptualized, procedures developed, and staff and community input solicited. Urban schools, in particular, tend to face factors that inhibit the success of school closings, some research shows (pp. 33-34). These factors include a bureaucratic structure that encourages a low quality level of data collection, of information analysis, and of delivery and factors that vitiate genuine community and staff involvement as well.

Some strategies for coping with the effects of decline were discussed. One of these was a set of guidelines developed by King-Stroops and Slaby to help districts predict enrollment more accurately (pp. 42-43). Another was Bellon's plan for strengthening the educational program in the period of decline, which includes techniques for assessing needs, setting goals, determining strategies, and evaluating results (pp. 47-50). Some reduction-in-force strategies were considered, along with research that shows that, although flawed, seniority is preferred over performance-based layoffs (pp. 58-59). It was also seen that, in general, an aging staff will necessitate a stronger staff development

program and perhaps retraining in areas that are increasing in vitality --vocational education and special education. Staff involvement in planning during contraint was seen as crucial to alleviating fears and developing a workable program. Considerations for facility management in the decline period were advanced and Wholeben's nine-step plan for school closure described (pp. 69-73). Methods for involving the community include the task force during closure, whose success depends on its type, composition, and charge (pp. 69-73). The necessity for continuing the involvement beyond the school closure is clear, and some ways of facilitating that were advanced (pp. 89-90).

In the last section of the paper, a digest of research-suggested help that states might offer was presented. Some of these suggestions included the improvement of forecasting methods, help with planning, provision of special services, and the development of more flexible staffing policies to protect women and minorities. Others were the review of labor-management policies in general, sponsorship of state-wide conferences on issues surrounding the retraining of teachers, and the development of a resource center to maintain computerized data on vacant classrooms (pp. 91-93). Much of the literature focuses on the need for states to revise their finance formulas, and pages 94-95 identify those states likely to be considering changes in school financing in the next legislature. Research suggests that the overriding finance issue of this decade will be the roles of the various levels of government in supporting education.

If there is a common thread that runs throughout the literature on decline, it is the necessity of capitalizing on the phenomenon itself, of using the period to rethink educational needs, goals, and necessary programs. Whereas earlier, in the period of affluence, these concerns seemed to take care of themselves and misjudgments could be covered with a blanket of dollars, this is no longer true--poorly managed programs, inefficient buildings, and poor budgeting methods will tell in the era of contraint.

Another common thread that runs throughout the literature is the necessity for encouraging two-way communiciation (information-sharing and problem-solving, in particular) at all levels--between management and staff, between districts and community, between districts and states. The logic is that communication builds support, and support is, besides planning, the strongest guarantee of successful implementation.

APPENDIX

BUILDING ANALYSIS: CAPACITY AND CONDITIONS*

Among the other factors to be considered by the Omaha Board of Education in school consolidation is the capacity and condition of each individual school building. By setting out a list of selected factors, each building can be rated impartially when tested against each item and a ranking determined. The basis of this ranking will be a numerically weighted average. Each selected factor will be evaluated against certain criteria, resulting in a numerical rating. Each factor will have a weighting multiplier which will be applied to the rating. All ratings will be added together and the sum will allow comparative data on a district-wide basis.

Much of the suggested data relating to the factors identified is routinely acquired by both private industry and governmental agencies. It is information necessary for proper management of multi-facility activities. Data should be collected immediately to establish a firm data base from which trends may be determined.

1. Operation and Maintenance

   The OPS system contains many buildings. Operation and maintenance costs vary among buildings by reason of the design and construction. These recurring costs can be examined to find the least costly buildings.

   These costs provide some of the basic information upon which each facility can be tested against district-wide averages for school type. The information can be obtained from existing Omaha Public Schools plans and records. It should be updated annually.

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

	Rating - Buildings Operation and Maintenance Costs				
Factors	20th Percentile or Lower (5)	21-40 Percentile (4)	41-60 Percentile (3)	61-80 Percentile (2)	Over 80 Percentile (1)
1. Building Costs:					
a. Per student					
b. Per teaching station					
c. Per square foot					

* From A Report On School Consolidation, Omaha Public Schools, 1981.

2. Consolidation of Facilities

If the decision is made to close a school the students will have to be redistributed to other schools or a new central school might be constructed merging two or more schools. The feasibility of consolidation may be considered on the basis of several factors. The merged facility must be then tested against all of the other factors enumerated in this report.

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

Factors	Inadeq. (5)	Poor (4)	Fair (3)	Good (2)	Excel (1)
1. Adequacy of adjacent school Site Student Population Facility					

	High (5)	Moderate (3)	Low (1)
2. Cost of Transportation			

	No (5)	Yes (1)
3. Replacement Construction Availability of adequate Site		

	High	Moderate	Low
4. Cost of new facility balance against the existing facility			

3. Code Compliance

Fire codes, building codes, electrical codes, plumbing codes, etc. frequently change and/or are updated and buildings must be brought into compliance for health and safety reasons. Items such as sprinklers, alarm systems, and enclosed fire stairs may be costly; and building occupancy, use, and reuse have to be considered. These costs have to be considered as a mandatory cost to comply with the law(s).

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

	Estimated Costs in Dollars				
Factors	0-25,000 (5)	25,000-50,000 (4)	50,000-100,000 (3)	100,000-250,000 (2)	Greater Than 250,000 (1)
1. Fire codes					
2. Safety codes					
3. Building Compliance					
4. Electrical					
5. Plumbing					
6. Other Codes					

4. Handicapped Conversion or Use

Recently laws and policies have required access for the handicapped in public buildings. Building construction and original design can determine whether they can be efficiently converted to provide such access. Single level buildings usually mean lower cost for extensive ramping or vertical transporation (elevators), than construction required by a multi-level structure. Conversion to special plumbing fixtures, widening doors for wheelchair access, etc., are other costs be considered.

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

	Estimated Costs in Dollars				
Factors (Please State)	0-25,000- (5)	25,000-50,000- (4)	50,000-100,000 (3)	100,000-250,000 (2)	Greater Than 250,000 (1)
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. Major Capital Expenditures

Major capital expenditures (non-code) such as a boiler replacement and roof repair are programmed so as not to overburden the budget. As such, they can be easily identified. The Omaha Public Schools has an existing program regarding scheduled repairs.

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

Estimated Costs in Dollars

Applicable Factors (Please State)	0-50,000 (5)	50,001-100,000 (4)	100,001-500,000 (3)	500,001-1,000,000 (2)	Over 1,000,000 (1)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

6. Adequacy of Site

The total area at a school site may be misleading. The actual placement of the buildings, site shape, topography, access, and other factors limite site use. School site areas designated for outdoor recreation may be impinged upon by the placement of portable classrooms on site or conversion to blacktop and used for parking. The included six factors should be considered as a minimum to be examined for each school site. Other factors relating to sites may be considered on their own merit.

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

Rating

Factor	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Inadequate (1)
1. School site size					
2. Parking area					
3. Room for portable classroom					
4. Traffic & Safety considerations					
5. City land use					
6. Availability of Utilities					

7. Central or Core Facility

Some school buildings have been designed, designated, or converted to central service type facilities. A central kitchen is one example where food is prepared in one building then trucked to other nearby schools. Another example is a swimming pool in a junior high that is also used by a senior high school for practice and meets. Auditoriums in various grade schools might be another example.

Factor	FACTOR CONSIDERATION				
	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Inadequate (1)
1. Cafeteria					
2. Kitchen					
3. Gymnasium					
4. Auditorium					
5. Other					

If other explain: _____

_____

_____

8. Community Use

School buildings and grounds are a major resource in a community. Use of the buildings may be school related for PTA meetings, scout meetings, sports, or used for public functions such as voting. Private rental of facilities can also be measured by way of permits. School facilities may be located adjacent of community recreation facilities or parks that lend them toward joint use. These sites should be noted.

FACTOR CONSIDERATION

Factors	Estimated Time Per Week in Hours 1-5 (1)	6-10 (2)	10-15 (3)	15-20 (4)	More Than 20 (5)
1. School Related					
a. PTA					
b. Scouts					
c. Athletics (Part of curriculum)					
d. Meetings and/or other functions					

Factors	1-5 (1)	6-10 (2)	10-15 (3)	15-20 (4)	More Than 20 (5)
2. Community Related					
a. YMCA					
b. YWCA					
c. Parks/Recreation (City)					
d. Polling places					
e. Civic Groups- state name:					
f. Public Requests (state functions)					
g. Other - please specify					

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